


KIDDERMINSTER
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WILD WARBLINGS:

By NOAH COOKE

A KIDDERMINSTER WEAVER.

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KIDDERMINSTER:

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1876.



INTRODUCTION.

To enable the reader to form a correct judgment with reference to this humble volume, it is perhaps necessary for me to furnish some brief outline of my life and its surroundings. In doing so I shall touch those points chiefly bearing upon my poetical predilection, and the slender means and opportunities afforded me for mental development.

I was born at Kidderminster, of poor and illiterate parents, in Mount Pleasant, March 8th, 1831. My father was a journeyman weaver; he wove bombazine, a fabric composed of silken warp and woollen weft. The looms he held were built in the garret of the house he occupied. My mother also employed her spare time at the same business; and a bombazine loom was probably one of the first objects my eyes beheld. At an early age I was sent to the "Old Church school," where the instruction was, I think, given gratuitously, for I do not recollect ever carrying any school-pence. During the time I attended that school there was a change of schoolmasters; the first was a blithe, cleanly-looking, kind old gentleman, and I learnt to read and write a little under his care. His successor was a violent austere man, and I took a dislike to him at first sight. I often had cause to repent the change, and I began to dread the school as a place for torture rather than tuition. I played truant very frequently; the meadows and green lanes had greater attractions for me than the hated school. About that time the bombazine trade collapsed, and we were reduced to the greatest straits. I soon learnt by a too practical experience the miseries of extreme poverty. After enduring many privations and vicissitudes our domestic prospects grew a little brighter, and I got my first job of work. My employment was to turn a silk-winding machine, and my wages were two shillings a week, with twopence for

myself. With this pocket money I often made purchases of little books. Having no one to guide me in my choice, I preferred those with highly-coloured illustrated covers, and I am afraid I did not profit much by their perusal. I possessed a very inquisitive mind, but being very reserved in my disposition, I chose to solve the problems which perplexed me by the exercise of my own faculties, rather than ask questions. When I grew older and stronger I became a "draw-boy," or assistant to a Brussels carpet weaver. I remained at the "drawing," without any prospect of becoming a weaver, until I became thoroughly disheartened. Five shillings and twopence a week in wages for about 14 hours a day of work was not very encouraging. When we were "hard on" I have often dragged my weary limbs homeward at 10 o'clock p.m., and when there I have fallen asleep over my bit of supper, and have been hurried out of bed next morning at one or two o'clock, to enable my "gaffer" to finish his "piece" in time for payment. Mental culture was, under such circumstances, almost impossible. I went to Sunday school sometimes, but my love of rural rambles seriously interfered with my regular attendance; still I managed to improve myself in reading, and I also gained a little religious knowledge. I left home and tramped into the Black Country. Near Brierley Hill I obtained employment at a fire-clay works, to draw clay from the "tempering mill" on a low trolley, along a small tramway, to supply the brickmakers. It was dirty, heavy work, very unsuitable for a weakly stripling as I then was. I left that place, and went to work in a brown earthenware pottery. Being there at the beck and call of several would-be masters, I conceived the wild freak of going to London. I travelled thither on foot in five days, and wandered up and down that great city four or five days more. I did not find the "streets paved with gold," and I found very little silver in my pocket. I did not mend my hard

fortune by that adventure. I grew weary of London, and longed to see the green fields and the fair spreading trees. I next tramped into Yorkshire, with no special object in view except to see the country. Ultimately I returned home, and found on my arrival that the carpet trade was very brisk. With the knowledge I had previously acquired as a "draw-boy," I had not much difficulty in learning to weave now that the opportunity was afforded me. Eventually a strike took place, and I again tramped to Leeds. One of my sisters had married and settled there. I was received very kindly. My sister's husband, the late Benjamin Riley, formerly of Kidderminster, was a weaver; he was also a well-informed man, and a poetical and prose writer of considerable talent. While staying with them I first conceived the idea of trying my hand at versification. I produced a specimen, and my brother-in-law complimented me upon it. From that time I have been an earnest dabbler in the rhyming art. Many of my earliest productions I destroyed. One piece, however, "The Song of War," the first I ever ventured to send for publication, has survived, and will be found in this volume. Returning home again on the termination of the strike, I got work at the warp-starching. This was done by machinery worked by steam-power. Upon the introduction of the power carpet loom, I was one of the first employed, and when I had surmounted the difficulty of learning the new kind of work—the hours of labour being much shorter—I found more time to devote to self-culture. I was then about 25 years of age, and previous to that time my scholastic attainments were of a very meagre description. I then began to read books containing sound instruction; I attended lectures on profitable subjects; and, in short, I gleaned information wherever I could find it. Although I was town-born and brought up to town life, I have cherished from my early boyhood an ardent love of the country. Often before I understood the feelings of my own heart,

the smiles of the sunny skies irresistibly allured me to the woods and green fields; and all through the Summer of my life I wooed nature under every aspect, and she ever spoke kindly to my heart. Some of my simple lays record my fond responses. Several of my effusions have been specially designed to bestow praise on some of the beautiful scenes around my native home. The indulgence I have received from the local Press encouraged my muse. When the "Shuttle" was set in motion, I naturally thought that, as a *weaver*, I was entitled to its free use, and my claim was generously allowed. Some of my indulgent friends have been pleased to confer upon me the distinction of Weaver-Poet. I have fairly established my right to the first part of that flattering title; for the click of the loom was my lullaby, a shuttle might have been one of my childhood's toys; and I have been in some way or other associated with the loom nearly all my life. I am a weaver now still dependent on the loom, and despite its many harassing cares, I have still some liking for the occupation. If admiration for the beautiful, and a yearning to express in words the glowing utterances of the heart, are qualifications for the poet, I may perhaps possess some right to the latter part of the title, however insufficient may be the evidence I produce in support of my claim.

That my simple effusions have awakened some interest is clearly evident from the fact that this volume is published by the voluntary subscriptions and generous co-operation of many kind friends, to all of whom I am very grateful.

These are a few brief memoirs of the career of

A self-taught rhymer, who thus lifts his head,
And dares the paths of poesy to tread :
Peruse them, reader, ere you criticise
This humble volume with ungracious eyes.

N. C.

At length a tiny ray of light
Shone glimmering, like a golden star,
Upon the frowning brow of night,
Which caught the traveller's eye from far.

A cosy roadside inn was near,
And there the horseman rein'd his steed ;
" Good host " said he, " let's taste your cheer,
And give my gallant horse a feed."

" Mine host" obligingly obey'd,
And bade a boy convey the horse
Where thirst and hunger might be stay'd ;
He tends his guest himself—of course.

" A threat'ning night, Sir," he began,
" Foul storms are brewing round about ;
'Tis wise to shelter if one can
On such a cheerless night, no doubt."

" The Fair folks, if they stay too late,
Will perhaps get drench'd more ways than one,
So I predict at any rate,
Although a prophet I am none."

" I hope your prophecy, good host,
Will prove untrue ; though I confess
'Tis but a hope forlorn at most ;
I'll venture homeward ne'ertheless."

" My loving spouse will anxious grow
If night restores me not to her ;
I promised that it should be so,
Therefore I'll keep myself astir."

" 'Tis wise and honest, manly too,
To strive our plighted word to keep ;
And that I really mean to do,
All being well, before I sleep."

“How far, good landlord, might it be
From here to Kidderminster town?
I may p'rhaps reach in safety
That place before the storm comes down.”

How far from Kidder., Sir? They call
It near six miles for one who rides;
But see, the sky is like a pall,
The road is rather rough besides!”

“Accept my thanks,” replied the guest,
“I’ll settle now my little score;
My beast has had a partial rest,
Pray get him ready at the door.”

The horse refreshed and looking nice
Was ready to receive his load;
His master, mounting in a trice,
Soon said “good-night,” and took the road.

Now then, my dumb, but faithful friend,
Thy trusty steps must help to guide;
Be brave and cautious, and we’ll end
Our journey ere the storms betide.”

Thus spoke the traveller to his steed,
And proudly stroked his flowing mane;
His was a noble horse indeed,
And well his credit did maintain.

The docile beast pricked up his ears,
And bravely through the darkness speeds;
No cruel whip or spur he fears,
A cheering word is all he needs.

But soon the rain began to fall
In torrents from the dismal skies,
And furious winds, with sudden squall,
Beat wildly in the horse’s eyes.

Still on and on the noble beast
Rushed forward through the wind and rain,
Which every moment still increased :
And yet the rider gave the rein.

The horse at length makes hasty pause ;
Then, bending o'er the creature's neck,
His rider vainly sought the cause
Of such an unexpected check.

He strained his aching eyes to pierce
The sombre shroud of nature through ;
But howling winds and rain as fierce
Made chaos of the dismal view.

Awhile he mused thus overwrought,
Drenched and storm-beaten to the skin ;
Repenting of the tender thought
That urged him from the roadside inn.

The elements their warfare waged,
And denser grew the awful gloom ;
The weary traveller grew enraged,
And forward urged his horse—to doom !

A precipice of dangerous form
Rose grimly upward from below ;
Upon whose hoary head the storm
Had dealt full many a mighty blow.

There on its brink, in awful state,
They stood, both horse and rider bold ;
One little step and down to fate
The twain must have together rolled !

That moment came the welcome sound
Of some rich-toned sonorous bell ;
And warningly, with measured bound,
Upon the traveller's ear it fell.

Far, far beneath their pathless feet
The answering echo caught the tones,
And mimicking with timely beat,
It thunder'd back in solemn moans.

The horseman's true experience told
That some deep valley lay beneath ;
He clutched the reins with desperate hold,
And shrank aghast from cruel death !

And now the rains no longer gush'd
In fury from the heavy sky ;
The frenzied wind its howling hushed,
And softened to a gentle sigh.

The freighted clouds unladen now
Across the firmament were driven ;
The stars bedecked night's bright'ning brow,
And shone like silver lamps in heaven.

The traveller breathed a fervent prayer,
And raised his thankful heart to God ;
Deliver'd from the danger, near
To which his storm-scared horse had trod.

The Vale of Habberley stretched out
Before his now enlightened gaze ;
The spot whence rings the song and shout,
On merry times and holidays.

Bold Wassel rear'd its frowning wood
Above the Valley deep and green ;
And Kidderminster dimly stood
Some two miles distance from the scene.

The Curfew Bell, which nightly toll'd
From its Old Church the hour of eight,
Had saved the horse and rider bold
From sharing an untimely fate.

The traveller soon resumed his way,
Though weary with his recent woes ;
He gain'd his home without delay,
And soothed his troubles by repose.

His anxious wife with joy received
Her husband and his favorite beast :
And soon, with all her fears relieved,
Prepared a welcome evening feast.

Next day they thought how they might prove
The gratitude their hearts confess'd ;
And every gen'rous impulse strove
Till thus their feelings were expressed :—

The Curfew Bell should ring an hour
On future nights of St. Luke's Fair,
And from its hoary steeple pour
Its solemn warning through the air.

So if some traveller homeward bent
Should be benighted on the road,
It was their generous intent
Some succour might be thus bestow'd.

A sum was placed in trusty hands
In furth'rance of their good design ;
And to this day the compact stands,
The bell rings out from eight till nine !

On St. Luke's night the old grandsire,
While yet the bell the hour peals forth,
Tells stories of the "Cover Fire,"*
And that rough journey from Bridgnorth.

And may the Curfew's measured toll
With kind intentions always rhyme,
As often as the seasons roll
Their changes down the hill of time.

* Curfew.

HABBERLEY VALLEY.

There's a snug retreat that's with charms replete
 All picturesque and gay ;
 Where in sweet content happy hours are spent,
 On each welcome holiday.
 Both the old and young, in a jovial throng,
 Oft mingle merrily,
 As they gambol o'er thy grassy floor,
 Sweet Vale of Habberley.

Sweet valley, green valley,
 Both fair and free :
 My heart beats time to the humble rhyme
 I sing in praise of thee,

In thy sheltered vale the wild wintry gale
 Blows with a gentler power ;
 And the sun's bright sheen gilds thy bow'rs of
 green,
 Through many a golden hour.
 There the early flowers in their budding bowers,
 First tempt the roving bee ;
 And the birds rejoice with sweetest voice,
 In smiling Habberley.

Sweet valley, green valley, &c.

When on festive times the silvery chimes
 Sent forth their merry strain,
 And we've sped away to enjoy the day,
 With a free and friendly train ;

We would soon resort to athletic sport,
Or romping revelry ;
Till the day was done, and the weary sun
Set fair on Habberley.

Sweet valley, green valley, &c.

And we've often sat for a social chat
Where the mossy turf was spread,
And the trees above in rich beauty wove
Green arches overhead.
Or on nut-brown beer and generous cheer,
We feasted gloriously ;
While the laugh went round and the day was crown'd
With joy in Habberley.

Sweet valley, green valley, &c.

There the lovely maid in her best array'd,
With an air of modest pride,
Will enjoy the walk with the tender talk
Of the lover at her side ;
And the old grandsire feels his heart on fire,
With a flame of youthful glee,
As he leads the spouse of his early vows,
To roam in Habberley.

Sweet valley, green valley, &c.

On each hoary height does the unknown wight
Inscribe his humble name,
To earn him a place on the well-filled face
Of thy ancient roll of fame ;
But the seasons blend, snows and rains descend,
And old time works stealthily :
Till the deepest line of his bold design,
Grows faint in Habberley.

Sweet valley, green valley, &c.

And the thoughtless boy, seeking stolen joy,
When the sun shines warm and clear,
Breaks the galling rule of the hateful school,
To play the truant there ;
And thy varied charms quell the dire alarms
For the cruel penalty ;
Since no master's rod rules o'er thy free sod,
Dear vale of Habberley.

Sweet valley, green valley, &c.

Fond memory brings, on her out-spread wings,
Fair visions as she flies ;
And my thoughts will rove to the scenes I love,
Till faithful memory dies.
May we often roam in the days to come,
To spend an hour with thee—
As we've done before in the days of yore,
Dear vale of Habberley.

Sweet valley, green valley, &c.

TRIMPLEY HILL.

Fair scenic beauty smiles around
 Old Kidderminster town :
 Though it may own no classic spots,
 Nor haunts of high renown :
 I've traversed many pleasant scenes
 Deserving praise, but still
 There's none more picturesque and fair
 Than lovely Trimpley Hill.

It may not rival Malvern's peaks
 In grandeur or extent,
 Nor vie in popularity
 With broad and breezy Clent ;
 But tread the Foxholes' sylvan paths
 Beside the roving rill,
 And what can match the flowery slopes
 Of charming Trimpley Hill ?

Roam through the Vale of Habberley,
 That dear romantic scene ;
 From thence climb through the rugged wood
 Up to the level green ;
 A prospect broad and beautiful
 Will then the vision fill ;
 And purest zephyrs fan the brow
 On sunny Trimpley Hill.

Pass by the row of poplar trees
 That proudly skirt the road ;
 Review the homesteads rising fair,
 And cottager's abode ;

Look on the modest little church,
Then I believe you will
Agree that rural beauty sits
Enthroned on Trimpley Hill.

There wild flowers blossom undisturbed,
And untrimmed branches nod,
In quiet fields and grassy lanes
By townsfolk seldom trod :
The happy woodland minstrel choir
Their songs of freedom trill,
And build their undiscovered nests
Around fair Trimpley Hill.

Go, ramble through wild Eyemore wood
Upon the western side,
And view from out its leafy shades
The silvery Severn glide ;
And mark the forest stretching out
Beyond its shores, until
It seems to mingle with the skies
Afar from Trimpley Hill.

I sometimes sigh for change of scene,
Which may be good for all,
But ever when from home away,
Its beauties I recall ;
And no fair spot that I have seen
My ardent love can kill
For a free ramble midst the scenes
Of smiling Trimpley Hill.

RAMBLING RHYMES.

Oh ! for a ramble, wild and free,
 O'er meadow, moorland, hill, and lea,
 Through pleasant vale and dusky wood,
 By tinkling stream and swelling flood ;
 Where romantic rocks are piled
 Rudely on the heathlands wild ;
 Where the rural hamlets hide
 Snugly in their peaceful pride ;
 And the hoary steeples rise
 Calmly pointing to the skies.

See the rosy smiles of morn
 All the blushing skies adorn,
 And the hills, like monarchs bold,
 Don their diadems of gold ;
 See the dew in spangles bright
 Twinkles in the golden light,
 And the woodland concert swells,
 Chorus'd by the village bells.

Ye who labour at the loom,
 With your cheeks devoid of bloom,
 Stroll upon the breezy hills
 High above the laughing rills,
 When the skylark sweet outpours
 Thrilling music as he soars.
 There your souls may catch the fire
 Meet for freedom's proud desire ;
 Thoughts like those of noble Tell
 Round your bounding heart shall swell.

Who would let such pleasure pass
To indulge the drunkard's glass ?
Who would be an ale-house hack
Shuffling up the gambler's pack,
When of pleasures, pure and cheap,
We may drink both long and deep,
Keeping reason on her throne,
Heart and mind in cheerful tone ?

Nature's vital stream imparts
Energy to languid hearts ;
Paints afresh the pallid face
With a touch of native grace.
Vicious customs cannot bind
Men of independent mind ;
Hearts that love simplicity
Will not live in slavery.

Pleasures planted in excess
Bring forth fruits of bitterness,
To be plucked in after years,
When the tree of folly bears.
When the welcome holiday
Gives an interval for play,
I would ramble, wild and free,
Happy in my liberty.

THE VIOLET'S COMPLAINT.

The tender blue of April's skies
 Was fair as poet's dream,
 And spring flowers blushed like maiden's eyes
 When young love bids them beam.

The sunbeams kiss'd the dewy tears
 From nature's face away,
 And soft winds from the southern spheres
 Gave promise of the May.

The air was sweet with fragrant breath,
 Fresh from an emerald bed,
 Where violets wove a dainty wreath
 On banks with mosses spread.

One flower among that virgin train, —
 Immodest floweret she, —
 Upraised her head in proud disdain,
 And murmured peevishly :

“These grov'ling mosses how they cling
 Unwelcome round my stems,
 I scarce can feel the flush of Spring
 Among my bright blue gems.

“Why does fair Flora, queen of flowers,
 Allow this worthless race
 Thus to impede my youthful powers,
 And mar my early grace ? ”

Bright Flora heard her proud complaint,
 And spoke to give relief,
 “My child, be humble ; kind restraint
 Gives joy instead of grief.

“Learn, simple flow'r, to know thy state,
 Thy vision wears a cloud,
 'Tis meekness makes thy kindred great,
 And blindness makes thee proud.

“ Those victims of thy haughty scorn,
No flow'rs or fragrance yield,
But they are, though more lowly born,
Thy succour and thy shield.

“ When golden summer's fiery zeal
Makes nature's bosom glow,
And thy frail blossoms fainting reel
Where Sol's bright fountains flow.

“ Then these mean creatures you despise
Will hoard the precious dew,
And with those dear drops from the skies
Will bathe thine eyes of blue.

“ Know too, that when the wintry wind
Howl'd fiercely o'er the moor,
And cruel frosts, with breath unkind,
Had left thee sad and poor.

“ The mosses with their spreading arms
To shield thee fondly strove,
And now, when genial spring-tide warms
Thy life, Wilt thou not love ?

“ Yea, even now thy leaves would trail
Inglorious in the mire,
Were I to grant, O violet frail,
Thy ill-conceived desire.”

'Tis thus that men with narrow mind,
And thoughts of folly born,
Deem humbler brothers of their kind
Fit objects of their scorn.

There's many a piece of human dross
With princely honours crown'd,
Whilst golden merit like the moss,
Lies hidden on the ground.

A RAMBLER'S OFFERING TO AN INVALID.

I come with the dew-drops on my feet
 From beside the woodland rills;
 I've traversed the meadows green and sweet,
 And climb'd up the breezy hills.

Thou can'st not trip o'er the smiling meads,
 Or list to the wild bird's song;
 And the free fresh air thy pale face needs
 May not float thy locks among.

I'll tell thee of joys my heart has known,
 And the scenes I've rambled through,
 In the early morning all alone,
 Ere the sunbeams drank the dew.

Before the lark had left his nest
 On the turf, to soar and sing,
 I sped to the meads and lanes, in quest
 Of the flowery gems of Spring.

I saw the rosy eastern light
 O'er the hill-tops softly rise,
 And the moving cloudlets, fringed with white,
 That spread o'er the purple skies.

I heard the voice of the early thrush
 Burst forth with a thrilling lay,
 And the smaller birds on tree and bush
 Respond in a chorus gay.

I saw the wind-flowers in the wood
 Their modest bloom unfold,
 And the daisies in the sunny flood
 Expose their hearts of gold.

I linger'd upon the primrose slope
Where those blossoms brightly shine ;
And I gather'd the fairest ones, in hope
To comfort that heart of thine.

I saw the roving and toiling bee
Round the opening buds rejoice ;
He courted the blossoms culled for thee,
As I made my happy choice.

On Wassel's wooded height, beyond
Green meads and bosky dells,
I heard fair Bewdley's peal respond
To our minster's merry bells.

I watched the young lambs on the plain
Enjoying their life's brief span ;
And I thought of the pleasures that pertain
To the higher life of man.

But thy lot is cast in affliction's shade,
Too dull are thy life's long hours ;
And I know you'll love this posy made
Of the fair wild woodland flowers.

MY POLLY AND I.

There lives a sweet maid that looks kindly on me,
 In a cot on the banks of the Stour ;
 She's blithe as a bird in a green leafy tree,
 And as fair as a pretty spring flower.

Her smile is as bright as the blush of the morn,
 And her eyes like two clear drops of dew ;
 Her teeth are as white as the blossoming thorn,
 And her lips wear the red rose's hue.

We are both rather poor, and I freely confess,
 If our fortunes were counted in gold,
 A very few figures the sum would express,
 And a small purse our money would hold.

But Polly can sew, and wash white as snow,
 And I have two strong willing hands,
 I'm blessed with good health, and no shadow of woe
 Across our fair prospect now stands.

Employment is constant, and master is kind,
 I can whistle and sing at my plough,
 For the face of my Polly is ever in mind,
 With a bright smile of love on her brow.

The spice-breathing woodbine and jasmine so sweet,
 Enwreathes my dear love's cottage door ;
 Its windows are gay, its furniture neat,
 And clean are the walls and the floor.

My love is the pride of her fond mother's heart,
 Her mother's a poor widow'd soul,
 And when Polly is mine, till death comes to part,
 The cot is to serve for the whole.

Then I shall well manage the snug garden plot,
 Making everything in it look gay ;
 And we shall be happy with "love in a cot,"
 All as blithe as the flowers of May.

THE PEASANT'S FAREWELL TO FATHERLAND.

In the green lanes round my English home,
I ramble leisurely and free,
For the last time 'ere I take my leave
Of scenes well-known and dear to me.

I see the daisies peeping forth,
Like clustering stars upon the sod,
In meadows where in days of yore
My youthful feet have lightly trod.

I pluck the primrose from the bank,
With blue-eyed violets hiding near ;
I press each flower with loving lips,
And wet them with a bitter tear.

I feel how tender are the ties
That closely gather round my heart,
In moments when with mingled hopes
And half-hid sorrow I depart.

The star of hope from western spheres
Illumes my path with cheering ray ;
Across the ocean's heaving breast
It calmly beckons me away—

To scenes where greater wealth rewards
The hardy, willing hand of toil,
And honest labour proudly holds
A goodly charter in the soil.

So I must tempt my pleading heart
 To cancel nature's valid bond,
 And bribe it in its present woe
 With ardent hopes that lie beyond.

The green lanes round my native home,
 And meadows stretching far and wide ;
 The waving woods, the sloping hills,
 With myriad blossoms gaily pied ;

The dancing stream, the busy mill,
 Beside the blooming orchard ground ;
 The farms, the quaint old village church,
 And quiet hamlets scattered round ;

All these exert a potent charm
 Upon this clinging heart of mine ;
 But every feebler power must fail
 To thwart my steadfast will's design.

For I shall sever every tie,
 Save faithful memory's golden chain,
 To make a home in distant lands
 That wait across the restless main.

It is not loving England less
 That tempts me from her peaceful shore ;
 But 'tis because hard labour adds
 So little to my yearly store.

The "wolf of want" has often prowl'd
 Around my cheerless cottage door ;
 And I have cursed the grasping power
 That keeps the toiling peasant poor.

'Twas then I swore no child of mine
 Should feel so oft the heavy stroke ;
 Or wear upon his galled neck
 The hard task-maker's cruel yoke.

And with His help who made the earth
 I'll keep intact my solemn vow,
 And bear my loved ones to the land
 That crowns with wealth each sweating brow.

Incessant toil and hardest fare,
 With all my household chattels sold,
 Leave slender means to reach the land
 Where toil yields blessings manifold.

Here honest wealth for honest sweat,
 Man's righteous boon—I vainly ask ;
There will I build a better home,
 With heaven to aid me in the task !

Farewell green lanes and flowery meads,
 Farewell each rural spot I love !
 I'll treasure you while memory lives,
 Where'er my wandering footsteps rove.

Sing on, ye happy little birds,
 And flow, ye waters bright and free ;
 In dreams henceforth I'll listen to
 Your sweet and merry melody !

Farewell ye friends and neighbours all ;
 My steps anon must seek the strand.
 Farewell my native village home,
 Farewell, farewell dear Fatherland !

“LET THERE BE LIGHT.”

When forth the mighty fiat went,
Which startled old chaotic night,
Unmeasured space and depths profound,
Made prompt responses to the sound—
“Let there be light !”

Then from the boundless, crude abyss,
To measure time through rolling years,
The lustrous orbs that live unspent
Sprang proudly to their shining spheres,
With new-born might.

Thus may the mental chaos move
Obediently at wisdom’s call ;
Till every soul of light partake,
And glad responsive echoes wake
The hearts of all.

Then shall the sun of knowledge rise
Resplendent through the scattered gloom ;
And every mind with light replete,
Leave to grim darkness little room
To spread its pall.

Still whilst we hail the lesser lights
That shine upon the mental eye,
We must revere the source divine
Whence these derive their pow’r to shine
In every sky.

In tangible, material things
Clear reason is sufficient guide ;
But faith must be our guiding star
To truth, with Christian hope allied,
Centred on high.

From ocean's unexhausted breast
The clouds draw full supplies, to pour
Upon the earth their precious rain ;
And rivers rolling t'wards the main
Return the store.

So, from the great celestial source,
May wisdom show'r her blessings free ;
And every gift flow back to him,
Like rivers running to the sea
For evermore.

£. S. D.

Compound addition, £ s. d.,
 Is subject strange for poetry ;
 Yet I'll essay in measured line,
 To gauge the theme and make it mine :
 Since money, in this grasping age,
 The heart's affections can engage,
 Till aspirations pure and free
 Become the slaves of £ s. d.

The fierce desire for £ s. d.,
 Has wrought both pride and misery ;
 Lo ! thousands rev'ling in excess,
 And thousands doomed to dire distress,
 Like Dives sat in sumptuous state
 With Lazarus crouching at his gate ;
 This cruel, proud, and false decree
 Exists through love of £ s. d.

Compound addition, £ s. d.,
 The miser makes his deity ;
 For which he suffers bitter strife,
 And pawns his endless future life ;
 " I will be rich " the poor fool cries,
 But like a beggar starves and dies :
 Then joyful mourners eagerly
 Pay due respect to £ s. d.

The cursed love of £ s. d.,
 Engenders crime and infamy ;
 The convict's doom declares its pow'r
 To work man's fall in evil hour ;
 The murderer nerves his trembling hand
 To wield the deadly knife and brand,
 And steels his heart 'gainst mercy's plea,
 By brooding over £ s. d.

Compound Addition, £ s. d.,
 Commands a world's idolatry ;—
 When faithless Aaron took the store
 Of jewels wrought in golden ore,
 He made a god, too gross in kind
 To captivate the heart refined ;
 But mind and matter bend to thee,
 Oh ! potent idol, £ s. d.

The mighty power of £ s. d.
 Breeds foulest wrong and tyranny ;
 It warps the law to screen the great,
 And plunders men of low estate ;
 The "one ewe lamb," by peasant reared,
 Is ta'en while lordly flocks are spared ;
 And though reproving Nathan see,
 His mouth is gagged by £ s. d.

Compound Addition, £ s. d.,
 Has tarnish'd Christianity,
 The grov'ling lust of worldly gain
 Has soil'd her robes with many a stain.
 Her face, once shining fair and bright
 With spotless truth and heavenly light,
 Is marked with vile apostacy,
 And branded dark with £ s. d.

Seductive idol, £ s. d.,
 Must all creation bend to thee ?
 Is there no higher throne than thine,
 Nor creed more lovely and divine ?
 Yes ! bless the holy pow'rs above
 We've truth and justice, light and love !
 This faith sublime can set us free,
 And break the yoke of £ s. d.

SONG.

I love the shore, where evermore
 Old Ocean's anthem swells,
 And restless waves, in sea-wrought caves,
 Deposit dainty shells ;
 But better still I love the rill,
 Whose tinkling music wakes
 The echoes mild in woodlands wild,
 Among the flowery brakes.

I've seen the tide in summer glide,
 Upon the level sand,
 And bathed my breast in white sea-crest
 That kissed the sunny strand ;
 The flowing seas and fresh'ning breeze
 Can novel joys impart ;
 But though I roam, I love my home
 In green Old England's heart.

I've watched the sail, big with the gale,
 Bear down the vessel fleet
 To that dim line across the brine
 Where sky and waters meet ;
 I've merrily sail'd on the sea,
 In day's meridian sheen ;
 But fancy yearn'd, and fondly turn'd
 To hills and vallies green.

I love to see our flag wave free,
 Where Ocean proudly skips
 Around the coasts, where foreign hosts
 Ne'er trust their battle ships.
 To those who brave the storm-toss'd wave
 May lasting honours be ;
 But woodland bow'rs and smiling flow'rs
 In England's heart, for me.

THE BROOK.

*And this our life, exempt from public haunt,
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.*—SHAKESPEARE

I watch'd a little brooklet flow
Its flowery banks between ;
I traced its windings through the woods
And through the meadows green.

At length it pour'd its shining store
Into a silvery pond ;
It turn'd the miller's busy wheel,
And foaming leaped beyond.

The sluice was shut, the wheel grew still,
As I stood musing there :
The waters rising to the brim
Soon overflowed the weir.

Here is a lesson wise for thee,
I whisper'd to my heart,
In these gay waters thus constrain'd
To play a useful part.

The streamlet dancing through the meads,
Among a myriad flow'rs,
Reminds me of the fleeting joys
Of childhood's happy hours.

Its waters, struggling through the woods,
Like young joys overcast,
Soon leap again into the light,
When sorrow's cloud is past.

The pond is like a noble heart
Enrich'd with streams of love,
That spends its strength in honest toil,
The wheel of life to move.

The waters dashing on the wheel
In trouble and turmoil,
Are moments spent in useful thought
And profitable toil.

The water rushing o'er the weir,
Like time that's unemployed,
Runs fast to waste and leaves behind
No fruit to be enjoyed.

The splashing foam beneath the wheel,
I liken to the strife
That's caused when right and wrong contend
In scenes of daily life.

The calm beyond is like a life
That passions ne'er control ;
That ripples fair, and smoothly glides
Towards its destin'd goal.

In nature's book there's pleasant lore,
Peruse it as we will ;
And food for fancy in the brook
That turns the busy mill.

THE LITTLE FLOWER GATHERER.

One bright and balmy April morn,
 When snowy blossoms wreath'd the thorn,
 And gaily in their budding bower
 The primrose wooed the violet flower,
 A fair young boy, scarce ten years old,
 Into the country lanes had stroll'd ;
 And fondly culled, 'neath hedgerows gay,
 Fresh buds to form a wild bouquet,
 The golden marsh-flower bright had he
 Bound with the white anemoné,
 And red archangel placed between,
 With tender sprigs of hawthorn green.

Raising his bright, but modest eye,
 He hailed me thus,—as I passed by—,
 “ Good morning, Sir, pray do you know
 Where primroses and violets grow ?
 My poor sick sister lies at home,
 She cannot from her chamber come ;
 But Alie loves the violet blue,
 And primroses of yellow hue.
 I fear she'll leave us all ere long,
 To join the happy angel throng ;
 But as her earthly end draws near,
 She seems a thousand times more dear.
 She talked last night of fadeless bowers
 Bright with sweet everlasting flowers,
 Where cherub hands fair garlands wove
 Around the throne of light and love.
 She says the sky above our head
 Conceals the floor where angels tread,
 Whose silv'ry wings and garments white
 Are with God's beauty ever bright.

I rose betimes, ere yet the skies
Grew bright with morning's rosy dyes
And wander'd from the town alone,
To gather blossoms of my own ;
And so prepare a pleasant treat
For poor dear Alie, when we meet,
Then, Sir, pray tell me if you know
Where primroses and violets grow :—
Till angels call her, I would please
Dear Alie with such flowers as these.”
I led him to a sloping wood
Beside a gently rolling flood ;
Where lovely beds of violets grew
As fair as heaven's own brightest blue ;
And where primroses cheer'd the sight
Like clustering orbs of softened light.
He gather'd up a goodly store
Till both his hands could hold no more,
Then gratefully he homeward sped
To place them near his sister's bed.
His simple act of childish love
Will shine like gold in heaven above,
And guardian angels will employ
Their wings to shield the gentle boy.

WOLVERLEY.

Were I to choose a calm retreat,
 Away from noise of bustling street;
 I'd have a cottage fair and free,
 Somewhere in quiet Wolverley.

There are the homesteads bright and fair ;
 There sweet and healthful is the air ;
 While rich and varied scenery
 Is found in rural Wolverley.

The church, built on a craggy steep,
 Looks down into a valley deep ;
 Where waters dance to melody,
 Made as they pass through Wolverley.

There sunny hills and shady dells
 Repeat the music of the bells ;
 And flowery meadows pleasantly
 Stretch round the fane of Wolverley.

Wild heath and moorland, rock and grove,
 Show rustic cottages above,
 Where pass a cheerful tenantry
 Their peaceful life in Wolverley.

And there are stately mansions, grand
 As any in Old England ;
 Whose owners trace their ancestry
 For ages back in Wolverley.

We there find monuments of worth
 To which benevolence gave birth ;
 And works of art and industry
 Are also seen in Wolverley.

But it is not my happy lot
 To choose a home in that sweet spot ;
 So I must e'en contented be
 To sing in praise of Wolverley.

THE ROSE OF HABBERLEY.

The hawthorn wore its raiment white
 In honour of the May ;
 And sunbeams pour'd their jewell'd light
 On many a blooming spray ;
 But fairer than the sunny sheen
 That kiss'd the flowering tree,
 Was nature's sweetly smiling queen,
 The Rose of Habberley.

As I sat 'neath a mountain-ash,
 Which spread its branches fair,
 I first beheld her beauty flash
 Upon my vision there ;
 Since that blest time no fairer form
 May I ere hope to seë ;
 And I must love in sun and storm
 The Rose of Habberley.

Her lips were like the poppy red
 That's moist with morning dew ;
 Her eyes, like precious lustres, shed
 A glory bright and true :
 No flower of beauty ever shone
 In summer's rosary
 So lovely as my peerless one—
 The Rose of Habberley.

Each happy bird has won a mate
And sings to its dear love,
With tuneful voice and heart elate,
In bush and bosky grove ;
But not a bird that warbles in
The woods, more blithe would be
Than my true heart, if I could win
The Rose of Habberley.

I sadly haunt each calm retreat,
Around my dear one's home,
To revel in a vision sweet,
If she might chance to roam :
I'd crown her on my heart's proud throne
If she would smile on me,
And then salute her as my own
Sweet Rose of Habberley.

YES, OR NO.

The sun is sinking to his rest
 Behind proud Wassel Grove,
 And I am yearning to be blest
 By meeting her I love:
 'Twas at the gloaming of the eve
 That Katie bade me go,
 A final answer to receive
 Which brings me joy or woe.

My heart is full of anxious pain
 Respecting one small word ;
 I fear it flutters but in vain,
 Like some fresh-captured bird ;
 But yet an angel hovers near,
 And sweetly whispers, " Wait,
 Soon love and music in thine ear
 Shall seal thy happy fate !"

Be calm, my heart, and do not press
 Too much my willing feet ;
 If Katie kindly whispers " Yes "
 Thou hast a solace sweet ;
 She could not wish the evening star
 Should witness my deep woe,
 Had she resolved my peace to mar
 By harshly answering " No,"

MY COTTAGE ON THE HILL.

I've a cot on Trimpley Hill,
 Where the zephyrs play at will,
 And the sloping woodlands swell
 Round fair Habberley's sweet dell.
 Thence my eye looks calmly down
 On the busy carpet town,
 As I smile midst rural joys,
 Free from turmoil, smoke and noise.
 When the morning's amber light
 Burnishes the lattice bright,
 I rise blithely as a bird,
 While the matin song is heard.
 Off to labor then I speed,
 Through green bow'r and verdant mead ;
 Breathing-in the rich perfume
 Rising from the fields in bloom.
 When the sun's bright golden crest
 Droops towards the rosy west ;
 Then my round of toil is o'er,
 And I hail my cottage door.
 In my pleasant garden plot,
 Seated in my Summer grot,
 I enjoy my pipe in peace,
 Blest with labor's sweet release.
 Fair's my lot when Summer's prime
 Weaves with joy a happy rhyme ;
 But 'tis rough when wintry powers
 Strip the trees and blight the flowers.
 Then the winds blow cold and shrill
 Round my cottage on the hill,
 And my cross is hard to bear,
 Ere I reach my evening fare.

When on meadow, bush, and tree,
Winter's white embroidery
Hangs in chaste and chilling pride,
Veiling all the landscape wide.

I have traced untrodden snows
With worn limbs and aching toes,
While the solemn pine trees stood
Sighing dirges in the wood.

And I've trudged with weary pain
Battling with both wind and rain,
When no silv'ry gems of light
Deck'd the sable crown of night.

In those moments I would pine
For the town, where gaslights shine ;
Where the workman's home is won
Easily, when work is done.

But my heart, though often crushed,
Its impatient murmurs hushed
When some cosy welcome ray
From my cottage cheered the way.

When my humble board was spread,
And on hard-earned food I fed,
On my hearthstone warm and clean,
With my smiling household queen, —

I forgot the toil and pain,
Frost and snow, cold, wind, and rain ;
And I've said, content and blest,
“ Hardest toil brings sweetest rest.”

Take the seasons as they roll,
Pains and pleasures as a whole,
I prefer the country still,
And my cottage on the hill.

ANGLING JOE.

The Severn waters rippled fair,
 Its shores were covered sparely,
 As angling Joe sat fishing there
 Close by the wood at Areley.
 A maiden stroll'd along the bank
 Who caught his fancy fairly ;
 And though she was of humblest rank,
 She was a rose in Areley.

Her eyes shone like the waters bright,
 Her cheeks were blooming rarely ;
 Joe soon began his sport to slight
 For pretty Jane of Areley.
 Poor angling Joe saluted her,
 She noticed him but barely,
 And nothing further did occur
 To mark that day at Areley.

He hail'd her yet another day,
 Told her he loved her dearly ;
 She cruelly pursued her way
 And sought her home in Areley.
 Joe followed her and press'd his suit,
 She answer'd rather snarly ;
 Just then poor Joey felt a boot
 Somewhere behind, at Areley !

A voice cried, " Let the girl alone,
 She shall not with you parley ;
 My heart she knows is all her own :
 We don't want you at Areley !
 What can my Jenny see in you,
 A loiterer late and early,
 With nothing better p'rhaps in view
 Than catching fry at Areley."

Poor angling Joey trudged back home
 Through fields of wheat and barley,
 And since, he never cares to roam
 To ply his craft at Areley.

CHARMING CAROLINE.

Down in a fair romantic spot,
 Where silvery Severn glides,
 A pretty little rustic cot
 In its own garden hides.

And in that cottage home, a maid
 As lovely as a flower,
 Lives smiling in the pleasant shade
 Of that fair rural bower.

While lounging on a grassy seat,
 With angling-rod and frail,
 I heard a voice, like music sweet,
 Ring through the blooming vale.

Anon I saw a face as fair
 As Summer's brightest morn;
 That instant in my bosom, there,
 My sweet first love was born.

My love-struck state I must ascribe
 To Cupid's sly design;
 Seeking to snare the "finny tribe"
 I'm caught by Caroline!

Her cheek was like the sweet wild rose
 That blush'd upon the bough;
 Her chestnut hair, in smooth repose,
 Lay shining on her brow.

Like hyacinths at eve's eclipse,
 Her deep-fringed blue eyes seem'd;
 And through her rich half-parted lips
 Her teeth like jewels beam'd.

Like minstrel singing evermore
Bright Severn ripples gay ;
While I stroll on its winding shore,
To gloomy thoughts a prey.

I wish its waves could whisper sweet,
As on they gaily rove,
To tempt my nymph from her retreat,
And tell her of my love.

My former pleasures are but toys
For which I've ceased to pine ;
I'd give a world of other joys
For charming Caroline.

LABOUR'S CHARTER.

[Written after the Concession of Household Suffrage in 1868.]

Ye sons of toil whose manly brows,
 Grow damp with labour's dew,
 Come forth ! and try your new-born might
 With courage staunch and true.

The wrongs of ages crowd around,
 Demanding prompt redress ;
 And labour's legions must advance,
 Resolved to make them less.

A million " pauper-branded brows"
 Frown through our gilded wealth,
 And vice like some huge vampire drains
 Our nation's moral health.

Too long has patient virtue fought
 Unequal in the strife :
 Too long has poverty reproach'd
 Wealth won with blood and life.

But now a wholesome weight of power
 On labour's shoulders laid,
 Has trim'd her lamp of hope, and lo !
 Injustice stands dismay'd.

The people's charter, long withheld,
 By dint of toil is ours ;
 A weapon we must wisely wield
 To crush out vicious powers.

Designing foes, dishonest friends,
And craven cowards stand,
Across the path where labour leads
Her brave devoted band.

But wedded to our righteous cause,
Our faith in truth must grow,
And truth exalted in our midst
Shall silence every foe.

As Sampson leash'd with treacherous bands,
Arous'd his slumb'ring might,
Freed with a bound his fetter'd limbs,
And put his foes to flight ;—

So labour, struggling in her strength,
Though bound with many a cord,
May spring to freedom's feet, and break
From bondage long abhor'd.

Then forward brothers to the front !
Each one to play his part ;
With faith ablaze in every eye,
And hope in every heart.

But let us exercise our strength
To bless and succour all ;
Since dearest liberties abused
May prove our country's fall.

THE DRUNKARD'S CHILD.

Ah ! who is she whose youthful brow
 Seems wrinkled with a load of years ;
 Whose downcast eyes are ever now
 Bedewed and red with recent tears ?
 The ruddy rose of health ne'er bloom'd
 In that sad cheek of sickly hue ;
 Want and neglect have long consum'd
 The scanty joys which once she knew.
 Why sets disease its fatal mark
 So deeply on her pallid cheek ?
 Why burns the precious vital spark
 So feebly in her bosom weak ?
 Alas ! the tale a thousand times
 Told long ago I now rehearse :—
 She falls a victim of the crimes
 Which drunkards propagate and nurse.
 Her father who, by nature's laws,
 Her jealous guardian ought to be,
 Unnaturally his love withdraws,
 And leaves his child in misery.
 The alehouse and the gaming board
 Have sealed the fountains of his heart ;
 And now he rarely can afford
 The smallest blessing to impart.
 While she, his offspring, pines in grief,
 All foodless, friendless, meanly clad ;
 With heaven alone to give relief,
 To cheer her lot so dark and sad.
 Oh ! Jesus, let thy sweet control
 Soothe and subdue her anguish wild !
 Convert the harden'd drunkard's soul ;
 Have pity on the drunkard's child !

THE DEAD GOLDFINCH.

Farewell, merry little warbler,
 Hush'd and ended is thy song!
 Cruel death, with frozen fingers,
 Chill'd the music on thy tongue,

I shall miss thy notes of greeting
 Many a time in days to come,
 For thy happy voice no longer
 Will make merry my poor home.

Death impartial and remorseless
 Holds no mission long defer'd;
 He that quells the proudest monarch
 Stoops to strike a little bird!

Scarcely had I cross'd my threshold
 When my steps where homeward bound,
 Ere thy voice proclaim'd a welcome
 Ever ready at the sound,

When my heart grew warm and blithesome,
 And my lips essay'd to sing,
 Thou did'st gladly join in chorus,
 Making walls and rafters ring.

Did the cares of life and labour
 Beat upon my throbbing brain,
 Thou wert fain with songs to cheer me,
 Till I've half forgot my pain.

Though the wolf of want has clamour'd
 Fiercely at my cottage door;
 Ever constant, thou did'st love me
 None the less for being poor.

When I heard thy soft complaining,
'Twas my hand supplied each want,
Furnishing thy tiny seed-box,
Or replenishing thy font.

Oft I plucked the dainty morsel
Of thy much-loved groundsel seed ;
And thy ever ready cherrup
Thank'd me for the favourite weed.

Farewell gentle little songster,
Ended are thy merry lays ;
Thou did'st sing for me, and who shall
Blame me thus to sing thy praise.

SONG OF LABOUR.

Who sighs for glory in the field
 That's red with battle strife,
 Sighs for a chaplet made with leaves
 Torn from the tree of life ;
 Let those who would true glory gain,
 Turn from the field of slaughter,
 Where thousands stretch'd upon the plain
 Pour forth their blood like water :—
 To hasten on earth's golden prime,
 When man shall love his neighbour ;
 And peace and plentitude surround
 The honest sons of labor.

Vain glory marks the man's career,
 Whether by field or flood,
 Whose deeds are stamp'd on hist'ry's page
 In characters of blood :
 There's work of more exalted fame,
 To gild a nation's story,
 Than all the deeds that make a name
 For blood-begotten glory.
 Oh ! hasten on earth's golden prime
 When man shall love his neighbour,
 And peace and plentitude surround
 The sons of honest labor.

How long shall nations waste their strength
In desolating wars,
And men delight to talk of blood,
Or boast of battle scars ?
Alas ! These are a sorry mead,
Yet oft the only laurels
For which the soldier dares to bleed
In dark unholy quarrels.
Great hearts are yearning for the time
When man shall love his neighbour,
And peace and plentitude surround
The chivalry of labor.

UNION IS STRENGTH.

Brothers, come, unite together,
 Strive for justice whilst you may,
 Strong and well-matured endeavour
 Points the path and paves the way.

Rally round each threaten'd centre
 With a manly chivalry ;
 Each and all should strive to enter
 To the tower of *Unity*.

Men of every occupation,
 Blest with hearts alive to good,
 Seek for close amalgamation
 In the bond of brotherhood.

Men of heart and brain press forward
 To the field where foes are rife ;
 'Tis for such to lead us onward,
 Boldly in the righteous strife.

Combination, fellow-workers,
 Makes the proudest tyrant yield ;
 There should be no timid shirkers,
Unity is labour's shield.

Soon the enemies of labour
 Stagger 'neath the sturdy blow,
 When each man beside his neighbour,
 Shows a front to meet the foe.

Treat the schemes of selfish faction
As a work with folly fraught;
Futile is divided action;
Fruitless is each narrow thought.

See the tiny streams in motion,
Struggling onward to the sea,
These could never gain the ocean,
Were it not for *Unity*.

Watch the river, grand and solemn,
Spreading as it marks its length—
Unity swells its wide volume,
Little streams supply its strength.

We, like little streams, can never
Make our way to freedom's goal,
Till our efforts, like the river,
Mingle in one mighty whole.

A "QUILL" FOR THE *SHUTTLE*.

[Written for the first number of the "Kidderminster Shuttle."]

Clear the way ye sons of labour,
 Toiling at the busy loom !
 Make a passage for the *Shuttle*,
 Let it have sufficient room.

With the aid of loom and shuttle,
 Subject to the weaver's care,
 Warp and woof are deftly blended
 Into fabrics rich and fair.

Thoughts, like threads, arranged in order,
 Varied though the shades may prove ;
 May unite to happy purpose,
 Woven with the woof of love.

Hand and brain in useful action,
 Yield results that none despise,
 Working out designs of beauty,
 Rapid as the shuttle flies.

Knowledge, like a loom in motion,
 Needs some stronger power to guide ;
 Minds, like shuttles, to be useful,
 Must with good woof be supplied.

Knowledge is a potent lever
 Nothing human can withstand,
 Lightening to its proud possessors
 Every work that comes to hand.

Ignorance is like a shuttle,
Crippled both in tongue and eye,
Lacking those important features
Strength and shape can ne'er supply.

Vice is like a clumsy shuttle,
Blunt and broken at the nose,
Chafing every thread it touches,
Working mischief as it goes.

Folly, like an empty shuttle,
Runs a giddy, vain career ;
Leaving but a void behind it,
As the moments disappear.

Wisdom, like a well-fill'd shuttle,
Nicely wrought in every part,
Leaves behind as it progresses
Works of usefulness and art.

THE SONG OF WAR.

I'm a mighty monarch old and grim,
 I reign on the battle-plain,
 Where proud hearts fail, bright eyes grow dim,
 And the life-tide flows amain.

I've raged in a thousand dreadful forms
 Since this aged world was young ;
 And I laugh in the midst of my awful storms
 At the mad death-dealing throng.

I love to gaze upon ruin'd towns
 When the vengeful war-flame glows,
 And the victor's shout of triumph drowns
 The voice of a thousand woes.
 Rude trampled fields, sad rifled homes,
 And grave-heaps near and far ;
 With blood and tears and whiten'd bones,
 Tell the glories of grim War.

I carry death in my red right hand,
 And my name I trace in blood,
 On the smiling front of the bounteous land,
 Or the face of the foaming flood.
 I bid the spirit of peace depart,
 Regardless of tear or sigh,
 And I quench the life in the bravest heart,
 And the fire in the brightest eye.

Despotic powers that curse the earth
Esteem me a staunch old friend ;
But they know not when they call me forth
Where my mad career shall end ;
For I gloat o'er millions maim'd and slain
On many a gory bed ;
I feast on the carcase-cumber'd plain,
And the rivers running red.

Then woe to the people who call me lord,
And woe to the land that's mine ;
For I change the plough for the scourging sword,
And I give them blood for wine.
But when drums and clarions loudly play,
And the war-notes wildly ring,
Vast myriads own my potent sway
And bow to the blood-stained king.

THE SONG OF PEACE.

I'm a gentle queen, with a brow serene,
 I rule with a loving hand ;
 And my gracious power is clearly seen
 On the face of a smiling land.
 My reign promotes a nation's health,
 And blesses far and wide ;
 My handmaid, Plenty, scatters wealth
 From garners well supplied.

I love to see the ploughshare bright
 Glide through the mellow soil ;
 Or the scythe and sickle dashing light
 Through the yellow harvest spoil.
 I love to see swarth labour's sweat
 Repaid with its full reward,
 And the household band in a circle set
 Round the well-filled cottage board.

'Tis mine to bid fair commerce thrive
 Mid the city's busy hum ;
 And I nurse the arts that scarce survive
 The roll of the martial drum.
 'Tis mine to heal the bleeding scars
 Of nations torn with strife ;
 And to wean their thoughts from savage wars,
 To the gentler scenes of life.

War points to fields where glory waits
To crown the conqueror's head ;
But glory poorly compensates
For blood in battle shed.
Go where false glory counts her gain,
And greets her laurel'd host ;
Review the heaps of mangled slain,
And mark the dreadful cost.

A nobler, brighter, purer fire
In human hearts may glow,
Than aught that glory can inspire,
Or war's red legions show.
No longer pay war's bitter price,
But let his thunders cease ;
Abhor the bloody sacrifice
That mars the reign of Peace.

THE LOVELORN.

Forbear, happy Harry, to jest with me now,
A great cloud of sorrow hangs dark on my brow ;
I feel in my breast a sharp mirth-blighting smart,
For I've lost my dear Jennie, the joy of my heart.

As the poor stricken flow'r on the bright sunny plain
Which droops for the want of the fresh Summer rain,
So did my fair Jennie expire like a child,
On the breast of her mother, with anguish half wild.

The sweet light of love in her beautiful eye,
Which shone like the glow of the fair morning sky,
Is quench'd, and the rose on her velvety cheek
Gave place to the snowdrops of death in a week !

The well of my heart is full-flooded with grief,
Its hot rivers rush to my eyes for relief,
As I mourn my great loss, for no pleasure can prove
So rich as the wealth of her beauty and love.

Take from the fair earth all its sunshine and flowers,
Then what could beguile the dark tedious hours ?
Take love from the heart and light from the eyes,
And man, like a ruin'd world, languishing lies !

A short time ago I could laugh, sing, and play,
As blithe as a bird on a blossoming spray ;
But now I am sad as a storm stricken tree
That's standing all sapless and lone on the lea.

Dear, dear to the heart, is the friendship of man,
Without it life's pleasures lie under a ban;
But no charm on earth is so strong to beguile,
As the glory that shines in a sweet woman's smile!

Her beauty now haunts me by day and by night,
And like a fair spirit, with finger of light,
It points to the realms where fair souls from the earth
Repose in the beautiful home of their birth.

Then cease happy Harry, to jest with me now,
A great cloud of sorrow hangs dark on my brow;
I feel in my breast a sharp mirth-blighting smart,
Since I've lost gentle Jennie, the joy of my heart.

WINTER.

Fair Spring has long passed with her virginal train,
 And the Summer's bright blossoms are dead ;
 Rich Autumn's bright treasures no longer remain
 In fields and full orchards outspread.

Stern winter rides high on the wings of the storm,
 Like a tyrant invested with might ;
 Each tender plant droops its inglorious form
 In the breath of his merciless blight.

The sad earth despoiled of her vestment of green,
 Puts on her grey garments of woe ;
 No more are the clear laughing skies to be seen,
 Or the sun's bright and beautiful glow.

Hush'd is the song of the gay woodland bird,
 And no voice speaks the language of mirth,
 But the brief plaintive trill of the robin is heard,
 Waking up the sad echoes of earth.

Is there no wholesome lesson of wisdom to learn
 At this season so cheerless and drear ?
 Yes, truly there's one that's not hard to discern,
 If man's mental vision be clear.

Look abroad o'er the landscape, or glance through
 the wood,
 Which the rough winds have striped in their rage ;
 There's a sermon on duty, instructive and good
 For the simple as well as the sage.

Behold! the gay holly in blooming array,
Now putting its bright berries forth,
Smiles calm at the frown of the dark cheerless day,
And braves the cold winds of the North.

And the glossy green ivy now gracefully weaves
A garland around the oak tree,
Till the forest king smiles in his mantle of leaves,
Though the wintry storms revel free.

So we, when the joys of our friends fickle prove,
And the dark brow of false fortune lowers,
Should cheer them with smiles and shield them
with love
Throughout bleak adversity's hours.

DECEMBER THOUGHTS.

Not many care to ramble in dull December weather,
Where summer's leaves and blossoms lie shrivelled up
together ;

When heavy clouds are mourning o'er nature's faded
glory,

And chilly mists are shrouding the landscape dim and
hoary.

But there are scenes in winter to challenge admiration,
And fill the thoughtful mind with pious contemplation.
Gaze when the white hoar frost hangs on all things
created,

And earth looks like a virgin veil'd and consecrated ;
What sanctifying thoughts the mind will quick engen-
der,

When all the trees are rob'd in chaste and fairy splendour
And the meads are thickly spangled with gems of crys-
tal brightness,

And the hills are clad in mantles and crowns of wintry
whiteness !

They preach of truth and innocence unstain'd by gross
affections,

Adorn'd and compass'd with fair heaven's own high
perfections

Of white-wing'd seraphs rapt in beatific vision.

And saints in snowy robes entranced with love's fruition ;

All purified, and freed from tears and tribulation,

And waving in their hands the palms of exultation ;

With every bond of sin through Christ for ever riven,
Standing in bliss around the " great white throne " in
heaven.

Thus will the Christian spirit on faith's light pinions
wander,

From fairest scenes of earth to the holy regions yonder
Beyond this sin-curs'd vale and through death's awful
portal,

Where shining hosts rejoice in life and bliss immortal,

CHRISTMAS.

Dear Christmastide again renews
Its sweet associations ;
Reminding us, of Him who brought
Salvation to the nations ;
So let us all rejoice awhile,
Our cares behind us flinging;
To celebrate the great event
Of which our choirs are singing.

Bear in to cottage and to hall
The bright red-berried holly ;
And let it hang upon the wall
To banish melancholy !

Gay Christmas smiles in England's isle
From sea-bound shore to centre ;
And none to loose its loving hold
Upon our hearts may venture :
It comes to us in wintry hours
When frost and snow have bound us,
And Summer's shining wealth of flowers
No longer smiles around us.

Bear in to cottage and to hall
The bright red-berried holly ;
And let it hang upon the wall
To banish melancholy !

The fair pearl-beaded mistletoe,
For love-freaks all excelling,
Will from the blushing ceiling hang
In many a cosy dwelling :
The clinging ivy too must shine
Within doors at this season,
Or ancient custom will regard
The graceless slight as treason.

Bear in to cottage and to hall
The ivy with the holly ;
Let both together deck the wall
And do not deem it folly !

Plum pudding and roast beef will give
Less joy and satisfaction,
If grace and nature do not add
Poetical attraction.

How shall we sing the Christmas song
Unless we are made merry,

By seeing winter's glossy boughs
Wreath'd with the shining berry !

Bear in to cottage and to hall
The bright red-berried holly ;
And let it hang upon the wall
To banish melancholy !

The children have been waiting long
To give a welcome hearty

To merry Christmas when he comes
With greeting to their party ;

But disappointment will becloud

The brow of boy and maiden,

If there should be no Christmas Tree
With presents richly laden.

Bear in to cottage and to hall

A bough of berried holly ;

And let it flourish, grand and tall,
To make the youngsters jolly !

Then while the youngsters strip the tree,

And their glad voices mingle,

We'll chat and sing in harmony,

And make our glasses jingle ;

We'll gaily drink to those we love

In bumpers warm and pleasing,

To crown the happy Christmas feast

And keep our hearts from freezing.

Bear in to cottage and to hall

The bright red-berried holly ;

Its cheerful presence on the wall

Will help to make us jolly !

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

Rejoice, rejoice, and hail with happy voices
 The birthday of Jesus, our Lord and King !
 The glorious anthem of the holy angels
 Invites the loudest chorus our tongues can sing.

This day the "great desire of the nations"
 Brought blessing and hope to our fallen race ;
 And thousands, waiting the Messiah's coming,
 Rejoic'd to see the brightness of his sweet face.

The midnight skies ablaze with mystic splendour
 Affrighted the shepherds on Juda's hill ;
 While angels shouted "Glory in the highest,
 And on the earth, from henceforth, peace and good-
 will."

"Fear not, ye shepherds," cried the heavenly heralds,
 Fulfill'd is the faithful prophetic word ;
 The *sign* is given, lo ! the *virgin-mother*
 Brings forth the infant Saviour—Christ the Lord !"

Seek not this Prince in palaces of grandeur,
 No royal apparel, bright gems, or gold
 Adorn the child of meek and lowly Mary ;
 She guards Him in a manger from winter's cold !

His star arose above the dim horizon,
 Refulgent with haloes of wond'rous light ;
 The Eastern magi gazed with awe upon it,
 For lo ! it moved before them in beauty bright.

A sudden impulse seized those ancient sages,
 While gazing with wonder on that bright star ;
 Laden with gifts of gold and myrrh and frankincense
 To greet the King of Salem they come from afar.

To David's city, Bethlehem of Juda,
Both wise men and shepherds repaired straightway,
Where, in the manger of a ruin'd stable,
Jesus, the Holy Infant, in swaddlings lay.

Oh, love divine! the ever shining seraphs
Who worship the Godhead enthroned above,
With minds profound strive all in vain to fathom
The deep and boundless ocean of Jesu's love.

Gaze on that scene, ye vain and haughty mortals,
Who glory in riches and proud parade;
The Lord of Glory,—cradled in a manger,—
A pattern of humility for man was made!

Rejoice and sing, ye Christians meek and lowly,
For God hath exalted your humble state,
And raised your poverty above the splendour
Of wealth-loving worldlings called the great!

Sing, happy souls, for heaven and earth are blending
Their joys in a holy sweet kiss of peace;
Let loving concord crown both men and angels,
And joyful love's communion still increase!

A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

Draw near, friends and neighbours and listen to me,
 I'll sing you a ditty, both pleasant and free,
 Ere the warmth of dear Christmas chills in the heart,
 Or the gay smiles of mirth from our hearthstones de-
 part;

The old year is waning, and soon will have cross'd
 To the bourn where five-thousand-eight-hundred are
 lost;

But the New Year comes smiling with hope on her brow
 And joys in prospective to comfort us now.

Here's health to our friends all, and soon may our
 foes

Be number'd with those whose affection now flows;
 May industry thrive, crowned with wealth and
 good cheer,

And peace fill with blessing the coming New Year!

Mid-Winter is blessed with the fair Christmastide,
 When hearts join in love at the bright fireside;
 And we look from its light towards Spring's sunny hours
 When the meadows shall blossom with numberless
 flowers.

Then let us be happy, at least for awhile,
 Dear Christmas may cause e'en the saddest to smile;
 'Tis the dawn of Redemption, when God's loving plan
 Began to work out the salvation of man;

Though dead leaves of care on our brows may be seen,
Our hearts, like the holly, may bloom ever green,
If that sweet peace and love, which the world cannot
give,

Be treasured within through the years that we live :
Some friends may have left us and gone to their rest,
Since last round the gay festive board we were blest ;
But we fervently hope those dear objects of love
Are spending their Christmas in mansions above.

Fair Flora lies buried in slumbers profound,
And old Winter flings his dark shadows around ;
But we'll wreath his grim features with evergreens
bright,

And melt his cold heart in a stream of delight ;
But whilst we rejoice let's remember the poor,
Who beg for a mouthful to eat at our door.

That each heart may beat in a beautiful rhyme
With the sanctified joys of the sweet Christmas time.

Here's health to our friends all, and soon may our
foes

Be number'd with those whose affection now flows ;
May industry thrive, crown'd with wealth and
good cheer,

And love bring us peace and a happy New Year !

POUR OUT THE PRIME OLD ENGLISH ALE.

Come friends, and let us feast awhile,
 To crown these hours of leisure ;
 Let's smooth our brows, put on a smile,
 And cheer our hearts with pleasure !
 Though life has trials manifold,
 And every heart its sorrow,
 We'll make grim care relax its hold,
 At least until to-morrow.

Pour out the prime old English Ale,
 Brew'd in October weather ;
 And may its influence avail
 To knit us more together !

Some men esteem rare foreign wines,
 Or liquors more expensive ;
 But custom to good ale assigns
 Its patronage extensive.
 Good ale will rouse the drooping heart,
 And make it warm and clinging ;
 Its power will make shy songsters start,
 And keep the music ringing.

Pour out the prime old English Ale, &c.

Let ladies sip their creamy tea,
 And may they long enjoy it ;
 But tawny English ale for me,
 With prudence to employ it !
 Ale is our native comforter
 For spirits crush'd with trouble ;
 Drink, friends, your flagging hearts to spur,
 And joys shall soon grow double.

Pour out the prime old English ale, &c.

May blessings fertilize our fields,
And keep them richly teeming
With mountains of the grain which yields
The drink now brightly beaming.
May clustering hop-poles greet the eye
Across the waving barley ;
And may the vines ascending high
Around them flourish fairly.
Pour out the prime old English Ale, &c.

WHAT IS LOYALTY ?

What is loyalty ? is it to cringe and crawl,
 Like crouching curs in some unlucky hour ;
 To lick the feet of princes, and to fall
 In base idolatry before established power ?

Is it to tremble at the haughty breath
 Which leaves the lips of those of royal blood ;
 To act as though their ireful glance were death,
 And their bland smile the sole, the sovereign good ?

Is it to cleave the air with shouts ; to cry
 Like supple slaves, " Long live our gracious King ;"
 Though outraged truth strip bare the shameless lie,
 And in our teeth his graceless actions fling ?

If this is loyalty, men should withhold
 Their heart's free tribute from such senseless fraud ;
 Nor place, nor power, nor threat, nor tempting gold,
 Should move free lips till love and truth applaud.

" The right divine of kings " is an old plea,
 Urged in excuse by many a grovelling throng ;
Right is divine, and evermore shall be,
 But kings have often reigned by *charter'd wrong*.

The meanest toiler born, to sweat and groan
 Beneath the yoke of labour and of care,
 Has rights as sacred as a monarch's own,
 Though God alone may listen to his prayer.

True loyalty lives in the grateful heart,
Which will not grudge a generous meed of praise,
To kings who act through life a kingly part,
And leave their deeds to shine in after days.

But if they bring dishonour on the crown,
And stain the royal purple with their crimes ;
Should men shame honesty, cause truth to frown,
By raising shouts to suit the venal times ?

Men may respect their country and their kind,
And spurn the hand that draws the rebel blade,
Yet scorn to bend in adoration blind,
Or flaunt themselves in frivolous parade.

We ne'er should teach our rulers to forget
That all are subjects of the " King of Kings,"
That human suns oft at meridian set,
And highest honours wear the lightest wings.

Kings should be guardians of the people's laws,
They are not fountains whence all virtues flow ;
Princes and kings have many ugly flaws,
As sad experience and all history show.

Loyalty is fidelity to Right,
Love is its root, and truth its comely crown ;
When Wrong misgoverns with the rod of Might,
The face of Right must frown the monster down.

They are most loyal who oppose the most
The scourges of their country ; these are they
Who in the vanguard of fair freedom's host,
Check both rebellious and despotic sway.

FREEDOM.

Ye who swell the ranks of freedom,
 With enthusiastic mien.

Hurling at each proud oppressor
 Thunderbolts and arrows keen
 Act with wisdom in your warfare,
 Struggle only for the right;
 Take no foul or mean advantage
 When you triumph in the fight.

Smite where'er you find a tyrant,
 Snatch from robber hands the spoil,
 And restore the stolen charter
 To the vassals of the soil;
 Strive for all that's fair and honest,
 Take no less, but ask no more,
 Or the wrong you see in others
 May soon lie at your own door.

Freedom is a priceless jewel,
 Cheap though it were bought with blood;
 Right is holy, and the struggle
 To maintain it must be good;
 But remember freedom never
 Gives a license to do wrong;
 And the right that's true and holy
 Charters not alone the strong.

You have weapons strong and lawful
 Ready fashion'd to your hand;
 If you wield aright the franchise
 Wrong shall fall at your command;
 But if crafty knaves divide you
 Into bitter hostile lines,
 You are only tools of factions
 Working out their own designs.

Be to one another faithful,
And united man to man ;
Then the tide of freedom's battle
Shall roll on with labour's van ;
Then advancing right shall conquer
With each well-directed blow ;
Till the pride of lordly foemen
In the dust shall be laid low.

Every soldier of freedom
Should be pure as well as brave ;
Not a knight in public places,
And in private spheres a knave.
Shame upon the prating villain
Who is neither true nor free ;
Bound in faction's venal fetters :
Dare he speak of liberty ?

Men who sell their country's glory
For a price in shameful gold,
Must themselves, though rank'd as freemen,
Richly merit to be sold.
Esaus, bartering their birthright
For the tempting pottage mess,
Are but carnal slaves, unworthy
Freedom's blessing to possess.

Nations have been foully ruined,
Thrones unjustly overturned,
By the greedy venal traitors
Who with love of lucre burned.
Justice shall exalt the nation
Whose free sons are pure and true,
But the country cannot prosper
Where the faithful ones are few.

NELLIE'S WEDDING.

The bells attuned no merry peal
 At pretty Nellie's wedding ;
 Though love, with glory full and real,
 Its smile on her was shedding.

For her free virgin choice was all
 Her gentle heart desired,
 And he, her own dear happy thrall,
 Love's bright chains never tired.

Indulgent nature had bestowed
 On Nellie wond'rous beauty ;
 And nature's King his graces showed
 In her sweet love of duty.

Her eyes were like the sunny sky,
 Her smile like rosy morning ;
 But nought in Nellie charmed the eye
 Like virtue's chaste adorning.

And Felix was a worthy youth
 Enriched with manly honor ;
 His proud eyes beam'd with love and truth
 Whene'er he smiled upon her.

The world pronounced him very poor
 Because his purse was slender ;
 But love was rich, and blessing sure
 Must crown his passion tender.

'Tis true he had but little wealth,
 But he had skill to earn it,
 His life was blest with rosy health,
 And vice he'd ever spurn it.

Why did the bells ring out so gay
 And every face look sunny
 On grand Matilda's wedding day ?
 Some said it was the money.

But does the selfish world creep in
And tempt the heart to falter,
Where there should be no trace of sin,
Close to the Christian altar ?

If virtue is allowed to hold
The highest place in heaven,
Why are the Church's honors sold,
And not to merit given ?

The servile bells would ring a strain
Enough to crack the steeple,
To pander to the rich, or gain
The praise of royal people !

But though the village bells were mute
For Nellie and her lover ;
The birds gave them a free salute
From bush and leafy cover.

And though no dainty hands were found
To scatter bridal flowers,
The smiling daisies flung around
Their pathway silvery showers.

They cared not for an outward show :
Joy's golden bells were ringing,
And life's fair prospect was aglow
With love's sweet roses springing !

Let this then be their nuptial song,
Inspired by friendship wholly :
Hail to the beautiful and young,
The honest and the lowly !

And may they tread a pathway fair,
No strife nor sorrow dreading ;
For heaven blessed a happy pair,
At pretty Nellie's wedding.

THE UNTIMELY DAISY.

Ah ! white-winged golden-hearted flower !
 Dost thou essay to bloom ?
 The cold austere mid-winter hour
 Must work thy speedy doom.

Though Sol is shining bright to-day
 He but proclaims a truce ;
 The Spring is yet far, far away ;
 His smile may thee seduce.

Soon Winter's hoary frosts may wage
 Again their cruel strife ;
 They'll mar thy beauty in their rage,
 P'rhaps quench thy little life.

There's not a bud upon the trees,
 The fields are sear and bare ;
 The sad birds shivering in the breeze
 Are voiceless everywhere.

Lie close against thy parent earth,
 Till March has swept the plain ;
 Then thou may'st have a brighter birth,
 And longer life obtain.

Wait till mild April's genial showers
 Shall sprinkle earth's fair face ;
 She'll touch thee with her magic powers,
 And give thee strength and grace !

Then shalt thou hail the smiling May
When wild birds proudly sing ;
The lark shall near thy blossoms stay
To rest his weary wing.

And laughing children will delight
To tread the fresh green mead,
Bespangled with thy blossoms bright,
'Mong which the young lambs feed.

At present, thou art but a type
Of young impulsive love,
That's squandered ere its powers are ripe,
Or wisdom can approve.

If thou hadst reason, thou wouldst know,—
Taught by the subtle mind—
That timeless blossoms seldom show
The glory of their kind.

ADDRESS TO WINTER.

O, King Winter, stern and bold,
 Pray relax thy icy hold,
 We are shivering with cold ;
 Have a little mercy !

Thou hast made a lengthy stay,
 Exercising cruel sway ;
 Move thy legions far away,
 With their bitter scourges !

We've admired thy robes of snow,
 And the crystals on thy brow ;
 But we've had sufficient now
 Of thy hard embraces.

Get thee to the frozen pole
 Where the glittering icebergs roll ;
 There mayst thou have full control
 Over frost-bound regions.

Thou art lingering here too late,
 March is shouting at the gate !
 His rough winds must seal our fate
 And thy wrath together.

Many heads hast thou laid low,
 And filled many hearts with woe,
 Now we hope thou wilt forego
 Further devastation,

Thou hast with thy arrows stung
Rich and poor, old and young ;
Further, therefore, don't prolong
Thy unwelcome visit.

Dark and cold has been thy reign,
And the earth o'er hill and plain,
Numb'd within thy pow'r, has lain
Like a wretched captive.

Few of spring-time's primal flowers
Are yet seen in warmest bowers ;
E'en the hardy crocus cowers
In thy chilly presence.

Hasty buds on early trees
Venture out by slow degrees,
Only in thy breath to freeze,
Cold hard-visaged winter !

Birds are ready now to sing
Their sweet music to the spring ;
But they all wait shivering
For the merry sunshine.

Go back, Winter, to thy home ;
Let the smiling springtide come
To awake the wild bees' hum,
And the birds' gay carol !

SIGNS OF SPRING.

Fair signs of Spring are peeping through
 Bleak winter's thick inclement gloom ;
 And many a wayside plant begins
 Again to wear its leafy plume.

The length'ning day in triumph breaks
 Into the yielding shades of night ;
 And woodland minstrels gaily trill
 Their notes to bless the cheering light.

The willows in the tangled marsh
 Are red'ning with the rising sap ;
 The grass, touched by the vernal glow,
 Is springing fresh in nature's lap.

The tassels on the hazel twigs
 Are swinging lightly in the breeze ;
 And half-expanded buds appear
 Upon the early-leaving trees.

The fair ground-ivy slowly trails
 Its wreath along the Southern slope,
 Wrapping the robin's cozy nest
 Within a fragrant envelope.

Close nestled in sequestered nook,
 The early primrose, plucked by none,
 Demurely opes her amber eye
 To greet the fair coquetting sun.

To those who toil from day to day,
Attentive to strict labour's calls ;
Surrounded by machinery's din,
Confined within the factory walls—

'Tis sweet to feel the free fresh air
Play lightly on the roseless cheek ;
To look on nature's face, and hear
The uncaged warblers, once a week.

How ceaseless are the changes wrought
By nature's fingers in the Spring !
The pretty flow'r admired to day,
Next week may lie a withered thing.

Yet beautiful is every scene
Portray'd on Springtide's pictured page ;
For changes have peculiar charms
Our fickle fancy to engage.

A little while, and we shall see
The silv'ry daisies dot the meads,
And yellow marsh flow'rs gleaming bright
As gold, among the quiv'ring reeds.

'Ere long the gen'rous sun will give
Full measure of illumin'd hours ;
And Spring will marshall neath his smiles
Her peerless pageantry of flowers.

Oh ! who can view the opening flow'rs,
The budding leaves and greening earth,
And feel no holy impulse rise
T'wards Him who gives all beauty birth ?

The shining heav'ns and blooming earth
Are with God's wonders richly stor'd ;
Oh, "bless the Lord, all ye his works !"
"Let every spirit praise the Lord !"

CROCUSES.

Crocuses, fair crocuses ! hear the children sing,
 As the flowers peep through in the early spring ;
 All along the border, in the flowery ring
 On the lawn, or in the garden gaily blossoming.
 Robed in their mauve and white, purple and gold,
 Are they not beautiful things to behold ?
 Blooming despite the rough wind and the cold.

Crocuses, fair crocuses ! let the children cry,
 When their rainbow beauty breaks upon the eye ;
 Telling that the summer time with its sunny sky
 And its daisy-spangled meads cometh bye and bye.
 One would think rude March, with its blust'ring wind,
 Would be to the life of their beauty unkind,
 Still the brave little flowers to mirth are inclin'd.

Crocuses, fair crocuses ! children, let them bloom ;
 Soon their pretty heads will lie in an early tomb ;
 When the summer days are come they will be in gloom ;
 Poor crocuses must give to other flowers room.
 They make lawn and garden cheery and bright,
 But they are passing away while we gaze with delight ;
 In a few brief days they will fade from the sight.

Crocuses fair crocuses ! blossoming so gay,
 Dying ere we look upon the glory of the May ;
 Ye are types of children snatch'd by death away
 Ere the flush of nature's life brings the perfect day.
 Ye are now preaching of life short and frail,
 Telling that death must us also assail,
 And over our prouder existence prevail.

Crocuses, fair crocuses ! let us still confess
 You pay a pretty tribute to human happiness ;
 We prize you for the richness and beauty of your dress,
 And though your life is short, we love you ne'ertheless.
 Better short life running happy and fair
 Than a long span of days all graceless and bare,
 Without life's rich robes, love and beauty, to wear.

EARLY MORN IN EARLY SPRING.

Hark ! the carol of the thrush
 Welcomes morning's rosy blush ;
 While the music sweetly thrills
 Laughing Sol peeps o'er the hills.

O'er the widespread ether veil
 Motley clouds in beauty sail ;
 And below, the dusky earth
 Wakes herself to light and mirth.

Violet banks and primrose slopes
 Nuture Flora's fondest hopes ;
 There beneath the spreading leaves
 Nature's melting bosom heaves.

Fairy tassels swinging gay,
 Cluster on the hazel spray,
 And upon the fair May-thorn
 Tender leaves are newly born.

Soon the daisy-jewelled lawn
 Will be smiling in the dawn,
 And the golden stars will shine
 Brightly on the celandine.

Even now, in cosy bower,
 Peeps the early budding flower ;
 Shelter'd from the wintry wind,
 Tempted by the sunbeams kind.

Now the skylark from his wings
Shakes the dew and lightly springs
From the turf into the skies,
Blithely singing as he flies.

Where's the bosom, old or young,
Dead to his heart-thrilling song ?
Surely Nature's euphony
Ne'er was framed for such as he !

Perhaps the bonny light-winged lark
Feels of heavenly fire a spark ;
And is man too dull and poor
Heavenward in his flight to soar ?

Is there soul that ne'er essays
Through its prison bars to gaze
Upward to its native home,
High above earth's azure dome ?

Smiling earth and sunny air
God's free love to men declare ;
Therefore let the heart revere,
His material presence here !

There's a close-link'd chain unriven,
Ever binding earth to heaven,
Reaching from the flowery sod
Straightway up to Nature's God !

THE CAPTIVE SKYLARK.

Poor lark! thou art merrily singing
 Thy notes through the bars of a cage ;
 Thy song in the city street ringing,
 No mate for thy love can engage !

Of liberty cruelly cheated,
 With throbbing breast close to the wires,
 On thy poor bit of turf thou art seated
 To carol the song of thy sires.

Thy gaze is fixed on the bright ether,
 Spread out like a smooth sea above ;
 I know thou would'st glory to be there,
 To sing in that sphere of thy love.

A prisoner lonely and weary
 Almost from the day of thy birth ;
 How can'st thou be happy and cheery,
 Or wear e'en the semblance of mirth ?

Thou hast never yet press'd the green bosom
 Of earth, on the wide open lea ;
 Nor sprung from the meadow in blossom
 To join the gay song of the free.

Yet though thou hast never been roving
 Abroad in the blue realms on high :
 Thy wings are instinctively moving,
 As if thou would'st soar to the sky.

Thou remind'st me of victims that languish
Enslaved in the chains of the strong,
Assuaging their heart-breaking anguish
With liberty's balsamic song.

Pour out thy clear notes ; and, oh, heed them,
Ye liberty-cherishing men !
Say, how can the spirit of freedom
Rejoice in that dull little pen ?

Let not the celestial singer
That's hail'd as the herald of day,
Be doom'd in a prison to linger
And chafe his blithe spirit away !

If ye would enjoy the full pleasure
Which flows from the skylark's sweet strain,
Go list to the free gushing measure
He pours o'er the green sunny plain !

THE SERMON OF THE STREAM.

“ Whence dost thou come, fair flowing stream,
 And whither dost thou go ?
 Thy song is sweet, perchance thy theme
 Some lesson wise may show ”

Thus did a nature-loving wight
 Muse by the river side ;
 And in the ear of fancy light
 The river thus replied :—

“ I come from yonder heathery hills
 Seen in the distance dim ;
 I sing, while my rippling bosom thrills,
 My part in nature’s hymn.

When I emerged from mountain steep
 To trace my devious way,
 I ventured many a daring leap
 Like a merry child at play.

A miller caught me in my course,
 And made me turn his wheel ;
 But I broke away with ready force,
 And laughed a saucy peal.

’Neath orchard boughs, by hamlets old,
 I sang a ceaseless strain ;
 And hail’d companions as I stroll’d
 Along the grassy plain.

We joined together, and we sang
 In concert loud and free,
 Till sloping hills and woodlands rang
 With swelling harmony.

And still I sing and onward roam,
 Like a cheerful passing guest,
 A wanderer towards my distant home
 In ocean’s boundless breast,

And now, O man, if thou wilt learn
A lesson from a stream ;
I teach thee one thou may'st discern
To be no idle theme.

I teach thee to be strong and free
Through all life's chequered length ;
I teach thee to love unity,
To profit by its strength.

Humility I teach thee too,
By tracing lowly vales—
In being to my mission true
Though obstacle assails.

The vallies give me greater power,
For here each woodland rill
Adds its bright tribute to my store,
And owns my sovereign will.

Fidelity to heaven's design
I'm teaching as I roll
Along my bright appointed line
Towards my ocean goal.

Creation's pictured scroll is ripe
With lessons meet for thee ;
Heav'n is the object of man's life,
As mine's the deep wide sea.

And yet, though man's supremest aim
Is fixed in heaven above,
He often feels a sense of shame
To centre there his love !

And he refuses to rejoice
While lower creatures sing ;
Though earth's free chorus needs his voice
To praise creation's King ! ”

WHAT'S IN A KISS ?

THOUGHTS SUGGESTED ON RECEIVING SOME LINES
ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

There's rapture in a loving kiss,
Partaking more of heavenly bliss
Than aught else found in world like this :
 Thousands believe this truth.

Let's turn the subject round, and see
What depth of darkest infamy
And villainous hypocrisy
 May lurk beneath a kiss.

Let us in spirit backward rove,
To view the suffering Lord of Love,
Bathing with precious drops the grove
 Of dark Gethsemane.

See Him arise from his deep prayer
To meet the traitor, Judas, there ;
Mark that salute so seeming fair,
 And mark that viper's kiss !

The cruel scourge, the thorny wreath,
The rabble goading Him to death
Was not more murderous than the breath
 Of him who sold his Lord.

Was he not called the Saviour's friend ?
Did he not His blest steps attend ?
Yet he for base and selfish end
Betray'd Christ with a kiss !

But consolation comes to greet
Our spirit with this balsam meet :—
Not woman's lips so soft and sweet
Gave Christ that cruel kiss !

'Twas her's to soothe the Saviour's woes,
To screen Him from His many foes ;
E'en while He hung in mortal throes,
Fair woman's heart was true.

Her love repair'd, far as it might,
The mischief wrought in Eden bright ;
When Eve departing from the right
Brought ruin on mankind.

A tender, faithful kiss can bless
With almost angel happiness ;
But in the Judas-like caress
What subtle poison lies !

A REFLECTION FOR PASSIONTIDE

What words can tongue or pen convey
 Into the measure of a lay,
 Which shall express in language strong
 The fickle temper of a throng?

Look back across the gulf of time
 Upon that Personage sublime,
 Who trod the earth in human form,
 Yet walk'd the waves and still'd the storm ;
 The glory of whose quenchless rays
 Has reach'd to these our distant days ;
 Whose light shall shine when time shall end,
 And years with countless ages blend.

Did He not hear Hosannas loud
 Rise heav'ward from the Jewish crowd,
 As through their ranks he meekly rode
 Subdued with sorrow's secret load ?
 They cut down branches of the trees
 To honor him, their king with these ;
 They strew'd their garments in the way,
 And waved their palms in proud array ;
 Too much they thought could not be done
 To welcome David's Holy Son.

Could those from whom such welcome rose
 So soon become His deadly foes ?
 Ah yes ! such then was human will,
 And such, alas ! we find it still ;
 Unless 'tis governed by the grace
 Of Him whose blood redeem'd our race.

Before the Paschal Sabbath came
 The Lamb of everlasting fame—
 A victim far more free from stain
 Than any in the Temple slain—

Was sacrificed for sinful man,
And fair Redemption's day began !
Soon were the loud Hosannas hush'd ;
To scenes of blood the Hebrews rushed ;
Anon they raised the murd'rous cry
" Away with Him," and let Him die !

Betray'd by Judas, and denied
By Peter, as he prophecy'd ;
Around by spies and soldiers hemm'd
The sinless Saviour stood condemn'd !

The people then to fiercest mood
Had changed, and clamour'd for the blood
Of Him who rode in honour'd state
Awhile before through Salem's gate !
In vain did Pilate interpose
To screen Him from His cruel foes :
He shall not be our King ! they cried,
Away, " Let him be crucified !"

Rack'd with the scourge and thorny wreath
They dragg'd the Innocent to death :
Beneath his heavy burden bent
" The Man of Sorrows" bleeding went ;
His soul surcharg'd with mighty grief,
And none to minister relief !
At length He hung 'twixt heaven and earth,
Each pang a theme for ribald mirth ;
And died disowned by those he loved,
While earth from zone to centre moved.
Example stronger cannot be
Of popular inconstancy ;
It plainly shows misguided will
Is ready to applaud or kill ;
By fever'd impulse quickly bent
It gives wild love or hatred vent.

EASTER.

Hail, spirit-cheering sunshine! welcome golden glow,
 Beautifying all things in this world below;
 Waking up the flowers from their Wintry sleep,
 And making many hearts with glad emotions leap.
 Thy smile at length has broken earth's rigid Lent-like
 fast,

Lo, Nature's joyful Easter dispels the gloom at last;
 And woodland choristers in happy concert sing
 Their merry Alleluias to triumphant Spring!
 Its stars of shining gold the marsh flow'r now displays,
 And daisies spread their wings to catch the sunny rays;
 The dainty primrose lifts its cup of amber sheen,
 And blue-eyed violets peep from out their beds of green.
 Harsh, hoary winter lays the sceptre down at length,
 Unable to exert his former sovereign strength;
 And Spring proclaims the advent of her golden reign
 By scattering fair flowers o'er all her wide domain.
 But what is Spring's revival, with all its joyous pride,
 Compared with His bright Easter, who death and Hell
 defied,

And gloriously arose from sorrow's gloomy grave
 With vivifying power and strength from death to save?
 His life here was a winter of hard unbroken woe,
 Fierce agony's keen frost forbade all joy to flow,
 And nought but tears and blood well'd from His grief-
 torn heart

Till He had fully paid our ransom's bitter smart.
But when his hour was come, by God's in-dwelling
might

He burst from out the tomb in majesty and light ;
That bruised and bleeding head with thorns so lately
crown'd

Is now with clustering stars of wondrous beauty bound ;
His hands and feet, and side, so rudely pierced and bled
Flow now with streams of light from glory's fountain
head.

The human veil was torn by that supreme event,
And God's own beauty shone divinely through the rent.
The Sun of Justice shed His brightness o'er the world,
And wintry grief and sin anon were backward hurl'd ;
Eternal Spring had come to scatter o'er the earth
The flowers of faith and hope, to smile on love's new
birth.

Then hail the glorious Easter of our risen Lord,
And taste the sacred joys this time may well afford ;
Let Alleluias ring from every Christian choir
To praise the conquering Son of heaven's eternal Sire !

THE WIDOW OF NAIN.

Slowly a solemn funeral train
 Pass'd from the gate of ancient Nain ;
 A widow'd heart bemoan'd her son,
 As mothers mourn an only one.

Jesus, the great Physician, stood
 And mark'd her sorrow's swelling flood ;
 " WEEP NOT" he said, and all amazed
 The mourners on the Saviour gazed.

The Prince of Love and Pow'r drew near
 To that lamented young man's bier ;
 And Death renounc'd unequal strife
 With Christ, the Sovereign Lord of Life.

" He touched the bier," and all stood still
 To learn the blest Messiah's will ;
 They heard these words in mute surprise :—
 " YOUNG MAN, I SAY TO THEE, ARISE !"

Life's mystic fires at once return'd,
 And at the Lord's high bidding burn'd ;
 The mortal seal Death's Victor broke,
 And lo ! the dead sat up and spoke ! !

To his glad mother's fond embrace—
 By wondrous work and special grace—
 That darling son was thus restor'd,
 To bless her still, and praise the Lord.

What tender love was there reveal'd
When that poor mother's heart was heal'd !
And what a mighty deed was done
When death gave back to life her son !

That storm of grief so strangely still'd
With love and fear each bosom thrill'd ;
Well might they feel that God's great pow'r
Had bless'd His people in that hour.

Soon, through the crowded gate of Nain,
That once lamenting funeral train
Return'd to bless, and praise, and shout,
With him whose corpse they'd carried out.

“ Young man, I say to thee arise,”
To many a sinner's case applies ;
“ Weep not” are words for every soul
That Christ's all-healing balm makes whole.

MY COTTAGE GARDEN.

My cottage garden owns no flowers
 Like those that bloom in palace bowers ;
 But it possesses buds as sweet
 As ever zephyr loved to greet.

In Spring the golden wall-flowers pour
 Delicious odours round my door,
 Which mingle in the airy flood,
 With fragrance from the southern-wood.

Under my rustic window-sill,
 Gay blooms the yellow daffodil ;
 And pretty-betty weaves beneath
 The hawthorn tree its snowy wreath.

The violets ope' their modest eyes,
 Tinged with the hue of Summer skies,
 And rosy daisies lift their heads
 Around the amber primrose beds.

In Summer time the queenly rose
 Beside the stately lily grows ;
 And other blossoms bright and fair,
 With dainty perfumes freight the air.

My beds are bordered round with thrift,
 Whose countless blossoms heav'nward lift
 Their purple heads, to meet the light
 Which crowns them with its glory bright.

I've bowers of woodbine neatly made,
 Wherein to court the cooling shade,
 Near which a bush of "bonnie broom"
 Displays its wealth of golden bloom.

In Autumn too my cot looks gay
Through many a flower and leafy spray :
And though I miss the wild-birds' song
The bees their humming still prolong.

St. Michael's daisies greet those hours
With clusters of pale purple flow'rs ;
And rich nasturtiums stand arrayed
Along my rustic palisade.

The hollyhocks, with blossoms bright,
Look down from their ambitious height
Upon the gems that shine below,
Content in humbler spheres to grow.

Inwove among the trellis bars,
The jasmine lights its silvery stars,
And breathes its exquisite perfume
Into my cosy little room.

And even Winter's rugged face
Retains some share of floral grace ;
Until its roughest storms prevail,
Some blossoms live to spice the gale.

Then fair chrysanthemums appear,
Last in the garland of the year ;
When these are gone, the holly green
Cheers with a smile the dreary scene.

Ere Winter's storm its anger quells,
The snowdrop shakes its pearly bells ;
And when the birds begin to sing,
The crocus comes to greet the Spring.

My plants and flowers discourse to me
Sweet themes of love and poetry ;
And help to break the round of cares
Which life at every season shares,

A COMMON NOSEGAY.

I cannot boast of flowerets rare
 Nursed up in heated greenhouse air ;
 But I have made a nosegay neat
 Of homely buds and blossoms sweet.

The spice-exhaling gilliflower
 Fresh gather'd from my garden bower,
 With pretty-betty pure and white,
 And daisies rosy, rich, and bright,—
 Some fresh buds from the lilac tree,
 A spray of fragrant rosemary,
 Sweet southern-wood just budding green,
 And sprigs of posy-thyme between.

These, with some blades of ribbon-grass,
 Whose pennons flutter as I pass,
 Compose my nosegay : who will say
 'Tis not a fair and sweet bouquet ?

“ But these are only *common things*,
 The *best* in every garden springs ! ”
 Exclaims the dandy or the belle,
 Who loves in fashion's haunts to swell.

My flow'rs are common ones I know ;
 But none can prove, because they grow
 Close to the door of lowly cot,
 They lose their virtues by their lot.

Our common leaves and blossoms are
 More sweet than many fetch'd from far :
 Let foreign gems for others bloom,
 Give me our native flow'rs' perfume !

It is a folly of the times
 To prize things brought from other climes ;
 And to esteem as blessings small,
 Things found within the reach of all.

GENTLE BEN.

Sweet Spring returns with sunny smiles
 In green robes gemm'd with flowers ;
 And her blest influence beguiles
 My few unfetter'd hours ;
 But sorrow's clouds will spread around
 My spirit's prospect, when
 I pass the grassy churchyard mound
 Which covers gentle Ben.

'Twas in the Spring we laid him there
 Beneath a budding tree ;
 And now the tender leaves appear
 They speak of him to me :
 When I gaze on his humble grave,
 So fresh and green again,
 Hot tears my heavy eyelids lave,
 For love of gentle Ben.

When wind-flowers strew'd the greening wood
 And primroses were bright,
 Death, ready at his pillow, stood
 To thrust him from the light ;
 The fatal stroke, too early given,
 Hid him from mortal ken.
 In vain had love and science striven
 To rescue gentle Ben.

One shower-besprinkled April morn
He calmly suffering lay :
“ I may not see the snowy thorn
Enwreath the brow of May ;
I feel that I shall nevermore
Move in the haunts of men,
Nor read the Summer's flowery lore ; ”
Thus murmur'd gentle Ben.

“ Yet still,” said he, “ I'm not dismay'd,
For there's a brighter home
Where heavenly blossoms never fade,
And sorrows never come :
You'll keep the grass green on my tomb
And strew some wild flow'rs, when
You glory in the transient bloom
Of Spring ? ” said gentle Ben.

Then whilst my feasting eyes admire
The earth with glory deck'd,
His fond and beautiful desire
Shall have my deep respect ;
And when my wand'ring footsteps rove
Through field or flowery glen,
I'll bring a tribute of my love
To lay o'er gentle Ben.

Still, when the early flowers appear
Like jewels 'mong the leaves,
Though these delights are ever dear,
My inner spirit grieves ;
But faith and hope rise in my breast,
To soothe my sorrow then ;
For God, I trust, has given rest
In Heaven to gentle Ben.

THE HAWTHORN.

I have sung of wilding flowers,
 Blossoming in rural bowers,
 Through the Spring and Summer hours,
 In their rich profusion.
 But of all the floral train
 Smiling over hill and plain
 None deserves a sweeter strain
 Than the lovely hawthorn.

With the fair, fresh green it twines,
 Tracing broad and snowy lines,
 Till its wealth of glory shines
 On a thousand hedgerows.
 Stretching far from cot to cot,
 Bound in many a flow'ry knot,
 Beautifying every spot,
 Hangs the silvery hawthorn.

See it weaves from mead to mead
 Poetry which all may read ;
 Hearts must needs be sad indeed
 Not to hail its beauty !
 When the leafy boughs are crown'd,
 And the fields are fringed around
 With sweet bloom, what is there found
 Richer than the hawthorn !

Lovely maidens deign to wear
Hawthorn in their shining hair ;
And it softly blushes there

At their cheeks' red roses.

Laughing children too, will bring
Trophies of the teeming Spring ;
Every tiny toddling thing
Craves a sprig of hawthorn.

See, it smiles in love and peace,
Promising a full increase,

Bidding every murmur cease,

Waking songs triumphant !

Every hand will pluck a spray

While it wears its white array :

Nature crowns the queenly May

With a wreath of hawthorn !

FLORA'S INVITATION.

Ye who pine in crowded cities,
 Too intent on selfish gain,
 Seldom looking on the beauty
 Scatt' red over hill and plain—
 Come and tread the grassy meadows
 Spangled now with pearl and gold !
 Come ye, while the leafy woodlands
 All their richest robes unfold !

Ye who linger at the tavern,
 Heated with the drunkard's fire,
 Come and taste the sweeter pleasures
 Which free Nature's scenes inspire!
 Let not grov'ling passions hold you
 'Neath their soul-degrading sway ;
 Break your chains to hail the beauty
 Smiling on the brow of May !

Now the richly-scented hawthorn
 Weaves its garlands all around ;
 And the bushes on the heathlands
 Are with golden glory crown'd :
 Soaring high, the grand horse chestnut
 Lifts its heav'n-directed plumes ;
 And below, the purple lilac
 All its flowery pride assumes.

Come and trace the sylvan arcades
Where a myriad blue-bells beam ;
Where forget-me-nots are mirror'd
In the gently gliding stream !
Uncaged birds are sweetly singing
With a full concerted power ;
Bees and butterflies are flitting
Merrily from flower to flower !

Is the love of beauty childish ;
Are the smiles of nature vain ;
Only fit in poet's fancy
As a pleasant dream to reign ?
Is it noble to be sighing
Ever for material wealth ?
Is it wise to glut the senses
And destroy the spirit's health ?

Rural scenes yield more contentment,
When the heart is rightly strung,
Than the sensual allurements
Relish'd by the giddy throng.
Hearts there are fast wed to freedom,
Too devoted to endure
Galling artificial bondage,
Fashion's favors to secure.

These free hearts can live and revel
In delights so little known,
That the soul of vulgar envy
Covets not their joys to own.
Though they lack all other riches—
Ever faithful to the Muse—
They their heaven-committed talents
Will for God and Nature use.

THE LOWLY POET'S GRAVE.

The poor poet sleeps his long sleep in "God's acre;"
 The grass has now spread its green quilt on his bed;
 The daisies are shining like white stars around him,
 And sunbeams are gilding the turf o'er his head.

No stone marks the spot where the dust of the lowly
 Is laid 'neath the sod for its final repose;
 But mem'ry can trace with unerring precision
 The grave of the loved in the long nameless rows.

Those poor death dim'd eyes were often delighted
 To hail the fair flow'rs and the green-vestured earth;
 Those song-loving ears now deaf to earth's music
 Have thrill'd with the sound of the wild warbler's
 mirth.

That now pulseless heart has swell'd with emotions,
 Which often found vent in the full stream of song;
 But death's winter came ere life's summer had ripen'd
 His hopes, and, alas! his sweet harp lies unstrung.

We'll weave a bright garland of fair wilding flowers,
 Fresh cull'd from the mead, the green lane, and the
 grove,
 And lay them to wither and mourn o'er the bosom
 That cherished for them a deep life-lasting love.

Coarse natures that revel in sensual pleasures
 Could realize not thine own pure simple joys,
 Nor sympathize with thy poetic creations;
 Thy thoughts were to them only fanciful toys.

Yet earth holds some spirits of finer conceptions,
For these must the poets devotedly sing,
Though fameless and friendless they sink to earth's
pillow,
With green grass alone round their ashes to cling.

Sleep on, gentle heart, in thy turf-covered dwelling,
A bright Spring shall come to develope thy powers
The songs thou wert lisp'ing will then be made perfect,
And angels shall hear them in heavenly bowers.

Respect his remains, ye free and gay-hearted,
Who still live to smile in the light of the sun ;
You'll need a green bed, like those now departed,
When your brief career in the world has been run.

COME YE TO THE WOODLANDS.

Come ye to the woodlands, while the morning bright
 Floods the smiling landscape with a sea of light ;
 Now the freeborn songsters happily rejoice
 In their sylvan homes, with full united voice.
 Come, with footsteps light, o'er the daisy-dotted meads,
 Where the shining river on its journey speeds ;
 O'er the rugged heath and through the quiet lanes,
 Where untutor'd Nature in wild beauty reigns ;
 Up the sunny hill-sides, sweet with mountain thyme,
 Where the sporting streamlets ring a merry chime,
 As they skip along with jewels on their breast,
 Between the greening banks with wild flow'rs gaily
 drest.

There the air is fresh, the prospect broad and free,
 With lowlands stretching out, beautiful to see,
 And the distant hills in grand array uprise
 Like buttresses supporting the over-arching skies.
 Come ye to the woodlands if you'd see the flowers
 Fresh with vernal beauty in their native bowers ;
 They will smile upon us, powerful to please,
 In the sunny glades between the spreading trees !
 If you've only seen them crowded in a vase,
 Rudely bound together 'gainst their own free laws,
 You have never known them in their gayest sheen,
 Gazing like sweet loving eyes through the bowers green.
 Oh ! I'd gladly ramble many a lengthy mile,
 Just to hail the glory of their lovely smile ;
 More than sordid riches, more than sensual mirth,
 I love Flora's treasures scattered o'er the earth !

Come ye to the woodlands, gaily let us go,
While the primrose blossoms like bright amber glow,
And the dainty violets ope' their buds of blue,
Rich with sweetest odours, bright with heaven's own
hue.

Now the fair anemone, purpled with a blush,
Kindles its white stars beneath the sheltering bush ;
Lifting its shy face, just like a modest maid
Inclining to young love, yet seeming half afraid.
Come ye to the woodlands, if you'd hear the lays
Of the bonny wild birds singing Nature's praise !
There the joyful chorus, swelling full and strong,
Prompts the human heart to emulate their song.
We may worship Nature as the handmaid fair
Of the Lord, whose glory fills both earth and air—
He who bids creation in sweet order move,
And stirs a myriad hearts with pulses of His love.
Shall a thousand warblers in His honour sing,
Shall the countless flowers their sweet tribute bring,
Shall the golden sunbeams to His glory shine,
And no adoration warm this heart of mine ?
Rather would I quench my faint poetic fire
Than never feel it glow with faith's supreme desire.
What's the soul of man, if it can never soar
Towards its Source Divine, existing evermore ?
Can Creation's haughty earthly lord refuse
To the Sovereign King his fair appointed dues ?
Is there soul contented, in these golden hours,
To leave his share of homage to the birds and flowers ?

MIDSUMMER BEAUTY.

How fair is the sight, when fountains of light
 The smiling fields adorn,
 And the beaming head of the poppy red
 Nods midst the waving corn !

I rejoice to see, on the open lea,
 The tall grass blooming fair,
 Ere the gleaming scythe of the peasant blithe
 Sweeps down the harvest there.

E'en the purple wreath on the rugged heath
 Is an object to admire ;
 And the graceful fern may in its turn
 Some pleasant thoughts inspire.

How sweet the shade by green boughs made,
 With sunbeams peeping through,
 And the spreading lawn, with the grass thereon
 Of Nature's richest hue !

The uncultured flowers in woodbine bowers
 I love for their sweet perfume ;
 And the foxglove gay, 'neath the woodland spray,
 I prize for its stately bloom.

But the wilding rose which so sweetly grows
 Upon the hedgerow tall,
 Is the joy and pride of the Summertide,
 And the fairest sight of all.

AN INVITATION.

Shopmate, come and let us ramble,
 O'er yon free and breezy hill,
 Now we've ceased awhile to scramble
 For subsistence in the mill !

Come and rove through grove and dingle,
 Fertile field and pleasant mead ;
 Where the flocks and herds together,
 In the flowery pastures feed !

Lanes all carpeted and cushion'd,
 Fringed and canopied with green,
 Which the feet press soft and silent,
 We'll explore with hearts serene.

I'll conduct thee where wild flowers
 Oft prepare a glad surprise,
 And with their untarnish'd beauty
 Win the worship of the eyes.

We will walk in Nature's temples
 Pillar'd with the towering trees,
 Arched with broad majestic branches,
 Roof'd with green leaves spread on these.

Where the wild birds ring out music
 Hidden in their leafy choir,
 Till we hear the deep responses
 Swelling up from echo's lyre,

Come and trace the uncheck'd streamlet
Frolic down the green hill side,
Shining like a silver ribbon,
With a border richly pied !

Oft the weaver's heart is lacking,
And his mind oppress'd with gloom,
Midst the weary whirl and clacking
Of the spirit-chafing loom.

Quiet scenes will soothe the spirit
Harass'd with the cares of life ;
Let us leave the town behind us,
With its money-making strife !

Freedom from the world's mad worry
Oftimes is a precious boon ;
Money seldom buys true pleasure,
When the heart is out of tune.

LEGAL JUSTICE.

If you owe a hundred pence,
And when pay-day comes you fail,
You commit a grave offence,
And deserve to go to gaol.

If you owe a hundred pounds,
And you pay not what you owe,
Mercy in such case abounds,
Lawyers wash you white as snow.

One-eyed justice can afford
To uplift her partial sword,
O'er the head of a poor debtor,
Dealing judgment to the letter.

But when knaves of high degree
Get in debt and can't get free,
Justice strikes with feeble stroke,
Loth to hurt such gentle folk.

THE YOUNG CONVALESCENT.

Come, gentle Eva, my beautiful darling,

And breathe the fresh air which thy pallid face needs !
The lambs o'er the velvety pastures are skipping,
And children exult in the blossoming meads.

The sunbeams have sipp'd the dew from the herbage,

The country looks gay in the glory of morn ;

The rills to their own wild music are dancing,

And young leaves the proud spreading branches adorn.

Come where the Mayflowers smile on the hedgerows,

Come where the daisies bespangle the plain ;

Come where the bluebells carpet the greenwood,

Come while the birds sing their sweetest refrain !

Spring has withdrawn the dark curtains of Winter,

And Flora rejoices in treasures untold ;

The blue veil of heaven in beauty is stretching

Afar o'er the mountains mantled in gold ;

The skylark, sweet minstrel, is singing and soaring

Away in the ether that circles the earth ;

The bee gaily hums, its labours to lighten,

And all nature revels in beauty and mirth.

Come where, &c.

Would that some rosebuds in freshness were blooming

On those soft cheeks, where white lilies appear ;

Would that the light in thine eyes, like the sunshine,

Were gilding those blue orbs with radiance clear.

Would that thy footsteps were sportive and nimble

As those of the lamb that skips light on the lea ;

Would that thy heart were blithe as the skylark's,

And thy happy voice making music for me !

Come where, &c.

How I should miss thee, my heart's precious treasure—

How I should mourn for thee lost to my sight,
If death had stolen thee from my embraces,

When cruel affliction shed on thee its blight.

But if in the fresh young smiles of the Spring-tide,

For life's choicest physical blessing we seek,

Soon, through His mercy who gave thee to bless me,

Health's roses shall blossom again on thy cheek.

Come where, &c.

WE'LL STILL GO A-MAYING.

Milly, ope' thy heavy eyes !
 Morn awakes in goodly guise ;
 See ! it lights both earth and skies
 With its golden splendour.

Music comes in varied notes
 Bursting from a thousand throats ;
 On the vernal air it floats
 Like a chorus'd carol.

Soon the crystal stars that glow
 On the meadows lying low
 Will be quench'd ; then let us go
 Where the daisies cluster !

This is May's enchanting prime,
 Tune thy heart to its sweet rhyme ;
 Not to hail it is a crime,
 To admire's a duty !

Come and pluck the rich white thorn
 Wreathed in blossoms newly born,
 Breathing sweetness to the morn
 From its snowy garlands !

When our love was at its May,
 And our hearts were young and gay,
 Chatting blithely by the way
 Did we go a-Maying,

When your cheeks blush'd rosy pink,
From no labor did you shrink
To secure the sweet white drink,
At the old farm-houses.

Often in Stone Finnie* grove,
With its tangled boughs above,
Our free hands fair posies wove
Of the wild primroses.

And of starry wind-flowers too—
White gems tinged with purple hue—
Hyacinths and violets blue
We made fragrant nosegays.

Many chequer'd years have flown
Since I first called thee my own ;
Still our love, though riper grown,
Has not sadly wither'd.

There are some few quiet joys
Which no time nor care destroys ;
One of these which rarely cloy
Is a rural ramble.

Rise, and let us tread the mead
Where the cattle freely feed ;
Though we lack our youthful speed,
We'll still go a-Maying !

* Stone Finnie, or Fenny, is very familiar to Kidderminster ramblers
as a charming rural spot,

MY CARRIE'S GONE TO CLENT.

I'm on the spree, so I'll be free
 And careless as a bird ;
 I'll taste the " barley bree " to-day,
 On Jack the cobbler's word ;
 I'll steep old troubles in a quart,
 And make my heart content ;
 No awl or last shall claim a care,
 For Carrie's gone to Clent.

When my old woman is at home
 I dare no pleasure seek ;
 If I get out to have a bout
 She drills me for a week ;
 But now I feel the rein is loose,
 I'm for a fuddle bent,
 No matter what abuse I get
 When Carrie comes from Clent.

My Carrie's tongue is loose and long,
 She rings me many a peal,
 And now there's silence in the house,
 I rather lonely feel :
 I've got two bright half-crowns in store,
 And they shall both be spent
 Before the smiling sun goes down,
 And Carrie comes from Clent.

Yet Carrie's not so much amiss,
 She scolds, but bless her soul !
 I might do things far worse than this
 But for her smart control ;

Here's health to her and luck to me,
I hope she'll not repent,
When she finds I've been on the spree
While she has been to Clent.

Without the freedom of the tongue
What would a woman do?
And what is man without a glass
To toast a friend or two?
I've wet my throat and sung a song
To give my feelings vent;
And now I'll toddle home to see
If Carrie's come from Clent.

THE EXILE'S VISIT.

Friend A., you have not yet forgotten—
 You long must remember, forsooth—
 The time when you made your last visit,
 To see the old home of your youth.

Recall that fine day when together,
 In the neat pony trap of a friend,
 We drove over Trimpley's green hill-top,
 And thence down to fair Catchem's End.

Ah ! that was a day to remember
 As a fair fleeting joy of the past ;
 Fond mem'ry around it still lingers,
 To eke out its sweets to the last.

I fancy I see you still standing
 On hoary old Ridgestone's high cliff,
 Admiring the deep quiet valley,
 And catching of sweet air a whiff.

The spirit, in care-laden manhood,
 For wild boyish pleasure oft yearns ;
 And I know you'd have loved a free frolic,
 Knee-deep there among the tall ferns.

A sprig of the blossoming heather
 You pluck'd from the rock's rugged brow ;
 And I daresay you keep that memento
 Somewhere in your northern home now.

I cull'd you some simple wild flowers
 To add to your fair heather spray ;
 You kindly accepted the posy,
 And bore them together away.

You said that thirty long winters
Had reach'd the dark gulf of lost time,
Since you saw dear Habberley Valley,
When you were in manhood's young prime.

We drove 'neath the nut-bushes hanging,
Well-laden, around Wassell Grove ;
You coveted boughs of the fairest,
To prize as a keepsake of love.

We gathered for you some rare bunches,
For we possess'd lungs good enough ;
While you kept your seat in the carriage,
Because you were short of the " puff."

We drank of the cool running fountain,
Not far from the old Drummer's Hole,
And then drove to town well delighted
With our trip and our country stroll.

How fleet-footed time rushes onward,
Like messenger never delay'd !
But thought flashes backward like lightning,
By memory's mystical aid !

Despite old Time's unfetter'd progress,
I turn from the present to gaze,
Through the lens of a bright retrospective,
To catch a brief glimpse of old days.

The natives of fair Kidderminster,
No matter how widely they roam,
Delight now and then to revisit
Old faces and places at home.

The friend here referred to is Mr. ACTON TAYLOR, the author of a very useful and creditable history of the carpet trade. He is a native of Kidderminster, but has resided in Yorkshire for many years,

THE LILIES.

Two lilies in my garden grew,
 Fair in the Summer light,
 The one of matchless golden hue,
 The other, spotless white.

Majestic in their peerless pride,
 They ruled the minor flowers,
 And with the queenly roses vied
 In sweetly fragrant bowers.

"Why cherish," cried a critic's voice,
 "This flower of gaudy kind?
 The orange-lily is the choice
 Of 'orders' ill-designed."

I cannot feel the force, said I,
 Of prejudice so vain;
 I see no valid reason why
 The flowers should not remain.

For why despise the richest gem
 That courts the eye of day,
 Reflecting from its stately stem
 The Sun's own ruddy ray?

Because the golden lily's made
 To serve mistaken zeal,
 Should I the guileless flow'r degrade,
 And vengeance on it deal?

No! surely no! for hands divine,
That ope' when blessings flow,
Made pearly lilies chastely shine,
And golden lilies glow.

And if I love the white ones best
It is because I see,
In those sweet flowers, the emblem blest
Of snowy purity.

The golden lily with the white
In harmony may smile ;
And I'll contrast their glories bright,
My fancy to beguile.

Grateful to Him who made the flowers
With varied beauties rife,
To smile in love through sunny hours,
And not to kindle strife.

THE DYING GIRL.

“ Dear mother, the morning is gilding
 My bed with a bright golden ray ;
 I know that a myriad blossoms
 Are smiling in beauty to-day.

“ Wild roses are blushingly yielding
 Their sweets to the Midsummer morn,
 And fair honeysuckles with garlands
 The thick shady hedges adorn.

“ But here, in my close little chamber,
 I cannot look on their gay bloom !
 I’m leaving earth’s beautiful sunshine
 To pass through the shades of the tomb.

“ You know, gentle mother, I gloried
 In weaving a posy for you ;
 You called me your pretty wild rosebud,
 And kissed me so lovingly too.

“ The rose on my cheek is now faded,
 And death’s snowy lilies are mine ;
 I’m drawn from your tender embraces
 To answer the summons Divine.

“ Alas for your joy, dearest mother,
 Your heart is with sorrow replete ;
 Earth’s richest delights are all fleeting,
 And ever both bitter and sweet !

“ But look through the wild flood of sorrow,
 Which flows from the fount of your love,
 And see the fair mansions of glory
 Prepared by the Saviour above.

“He has whisper’d to me of the beauty
That lights the celestial bowers,
Where gardens are ever in blossom,
And sweet with undying flowers.

“I have loved fair Summer’s rich treasures,
Yet grieved at their proneness to fade ;
They show but a glimpse of the glory
With which heaven’s home is array’d.

“But pluck me a spray of wild roses,
With fair honeysuckles entwined,
And let them breathe out their sweet odours
Till I leave their beauty behind !”

The flowers were cull’d from the hedgerows,
To smile at the sick one’s bedside ;
But ere those frail blossoms had wither’d
The heart that had cherish’d them died.

Thus did a fond mother’s fair darling
Lay down her dear life upon earth,
In hopes at the great resurrection
To smile in a glorified birth.

Ah ! who without faith in the rising
From darkness to “marvellous light,”
Could quit life and love at their Springtide,
And welcome death’s terrible night ?

“The flowers fade and the grass withers,”
Again to renew their fresh prime ;
And the soul shall put on a new body—
Immortal, refined, and sublime !

THE COQUETTE.

Fair maid I have noticed thy beauty,
 And feel not a shadow of shame,
 In gallantly paying the duty
 Which loveliness ever may claim.

I've seen the light grace of thy movements,
 Thy fingers so daintily white,
 And thy robes with those modern improvements
 In which ladies so much delight.

I've seen the gay smile softly beaming
 Around the fair porch of thy mouth,
 And the light from thy eyes brightly streaming,
 Like rays from the Summery south.

I'm not bent on wooing, fair creature,
 I know thou'dst care nought for my love ;
 I'm speaking to thee like a preacher,
 Thy sly little arts to reprove !

The blush on thy pretty cheek deepens
 When handsome young fellows are near ;
 And the smile on thy pretty face sweetens
 When they whisper tales in thy ear !

Because thou art fair, gentle lady,
 Of vanity wisely beware ;
 The homage so readily paid thee,
 Is due to ten thousand as fair !

REDSTONE FERRY.

Come Kitty, let us take a stroll,
 Ere this bright weather closes,
 To freshen on your velvet cheek
 Those sadly drooping roses.
 Forego your daily round of cares,
 I've grown impatient, very ;
 We'll have a day all to ourselves,
 Down at the Redstone Ferry.

The Sun is rising bright and high,
 Above the Clentine ranges ;
 And our old minster's charming bells
 Ring out their merry changes.
 Don't cross me with one vain excuse ;
 Why should we always bury
 Our weary hearts in gloomy streets ?
 Come on to Redstone Ferry !

The rattling train will set us down
 Close by the church at Mitton ;
 From there we'll ramble leisurely
 Across the heath near Titton,
 I want to see your cheeks look bright,
 And glowing as a cherry ;
 They'll soon become so, when you breathe
 The air at Redstone Ferry.

We'll roam along the Severn side,
Through meads of blooming clover,
And Bill, the boatman, will be there
To row us gently over.
But if you should object to cross
The stream in his small wherry,
We'll cross the bridge to view the rocks
And caves* at Redstone Ferry.

Through quiet lanes, by wooded slopes,
And rocks enwreath'd with bramble,
We may enjoy ourselves, and have
A most delightful ramble.
You recollect the time we drank
That sweet and sparkling perry,
That made me chirrup like a bird,
Down by old Redstone Ferry.

When golden arrows feebly fall
From Sol's exhausted quiver,
We'll homeward tread the flowery paths
That skirt the glowing river.
Then Kitty make no more delay,
Let's both be free and merry,
And snatch from greedy care a day
To spend at Redstone Ferry!

*This interesting scene lies on the south bank of the Severn nearly opposite the Stour's mouth, below Stourport. There is a bluff rock of red sandstone, rising to a considerable height, full of caverns. The place is said to have been a rude monastery in early times; and a monk named Lazamon lived there, who wrote a history purporting to trace back the pedigree of our "Old Nobilitie" to the dim ages of antiquity—See Nash's History of Worcestershire, vol. 1., Astley Parish.

LOVE OF HOME.

I love our Midland landscapes,
 Where fields are fresh and green,
 And graceful woodlands flourish
 With purling streams between.
 Here smiling Spring comes early
 To wake the sleeping flowers,
 And Summer's glory lingers,
 Loth to forsake our bowers.

Some praise the chilly Northland,
 With its wild rocks and hills,
 Its teeming towns and hamlets,
 And busy rattling mills ;
 Give me the rural Midlands,
 With flowery slopes and dells ;
 Where fragrant zephyrs revel,
 And Nature's music swells.

Some love the breezy sea-board,
 And praise the wave-wash'd shore ;
 Where nature's grand old anthem
 Is swelling evermore ;
 But I'll extol the Midlands,
 In whose lap I was born ;
 I love the waves that ruffle
 The spreading fields of corn.

I would not rudely venture
To spurn the zeal of those
Who praise their own surroundings
In poetry or prose ;
For home is sweet wherever
Our lot in life is cast,
And love and pride will cherish
Its memories to the last.

The thought of home can strengthen
The soldier in the fight ;
It gilds the sailor's pathway
With its fair rosy light.
The traveller's eye will kindle
At mention of his home,
Though strong desires may urge him,
Far as the poles to roam.

THE HEIGHTS OF WASSEL.

The early flowers are smiling bright
 Upon the heights of Wassel ;
 And I am hailing with delight
 The carol of the throstle.
 Below, the merry Bewdley bells
 Are mingling their sweet voices ;
 Through grand old Wyre the music swells,
 And Severn Vale rejoices.

Oh, how I love these woodland hills,
 So beautiful and breezy ;
 Where every wild bird proudly trills
 His song so free and easy !
 I loved to roam these scenes among
 When boyhood's zeal was glowing ;
 I've hail'd them when sweet love was young,
 And joy was overflowing.

I've seen them when around their brow
 The Wintry storm-clouds hovered ;
 And also when with fragrant snow
 The hawthorn boughs were covered.
 I've seen them all their pride assume
 In Summer's golden weather ;
 I've seen them when the purple bloom
 Had faded on the heather.

I see them now in sober life
 When early joys are waning ;
 Yet though around me cares are rife,
 Their charms are still remaining.
 Though labour claims me as a thrall,
 And cares against me jostle,
 I'll sometimes break away from all
 To tread the heights of Wassel !

THE OLD VILLAGE MILL.

I love, at the close of the bright Summer day,
 When the soft air grows pleasantly chill,
 To tread the green lanes and leisurely stray,
 Through the paths near the old village mill.

Proud Sol has declined, and a rich rosy blush
 Illumes the green brow of the hill ;
 And the bright waters leap, with a musical rush,
 O'er the weir at the old village mill.

'Twas just such a time, in my "hey-day of life,"
 When I first felt love's potent thrill,
 And Nellie consented to be my sweet wife,
 As we strolled round the old village mill.

The evening star peep'd from the beautiful sky,
 And seeming to smile in goodwill,
 It mirror'd its light in the waters hard by,
 Which run through the old village mill.

The wild rose and woodbine, in beauty array'd,
 Their delicate perfumes distil :
 They're not so sweet now as they were when I stray'd
 With Nell, near the old village mill.

How sweet were those dear happy days of the past,
 Remembrance lives fresh with them still ;
 And though my heart's joy is with sorrow o'er-cast,
 I still love the old village mill.

The heart 'reft of love grows weary and dim,
 And nothing on earth can refill
 My life's broken cup first crowned to the brim
 With love, near the old village mill.

Sing on, happy birds, bloom, sweet-scented flowers,
 And dance through the meads, silver rill ;
 The soul of dear Nell visits mine in the hours
 When I roam near the old village mill !

THE FREE COMMONER.

Upon the rugged heath, surrounded by a wreath
 Of bramble bushes, heather, fern, and ling,
 Snug in a quiet spot I own a rocky cot,
 And at its door I merrily can sing.

By dint of earnest toil, hard-sweating and turmoil
 I've cleared a portion of the common wild :
 And many flowers sweet, with pleasant things to eat,
 I've often from the stubborn earth beguiled.

I manage just to keep a few tame mountain sheep,
 A roguish donkey, and a thriving pig ;
 I'm doing pretty fair, although I never care
 With idle boast to make myself look big.

Few persons here I see with whom I may make free,
 My wife and rosy youngsters are the chief ;
 We're all content to stay from noisy towns away,
 Our visits there are far between and brief.

In liberty I roam, around my rustic home,
 There's no one to say :—whither goest thou ?
 Through the blooming furze, despite its thorns and burrs
 I clamber to the mountain's craggy brow.

In Winter time 'tis true we have some cause to rue,
 When shut in by a desert of deep snow,
 And wild winds make a rout, our cottage round about,
 Yet even then we've comfort in our woe.

The thick red sandstone roof of my cot* is storm-proof,
The door and windows we keep weather-tight ;
We make a cheerful blaze, on the hearthstone, through
those days,
And a cosy nest to creep into at night.

When Winter's term is run, we hail the glowing sun,
Forgetting in his smile the recent frown ;
The wild birds sing before my open cottage door,
When ferns uncurl above the stubble brown.

There's something dear as life within my bosom rife,
It is the glowing impulse of the free ;
For I'm no master's thrall, I crouch at no man's call,
To Him above alone I bend the knee.

I know I should not thrive in crowded human hive,
Where men for wealth are wrestling amain :
Though lowly is my lot, here in my rocky cot
I'll live content with peace and modest gain !

* These lines were suggested on passing a lonely rock-hewn cottage on the western side of Kinver Edge.

THE WILD FLOWER ON THE LAWN.

“What dost thou there, rude wilding thing
 With flaunting yellow head;
 Canst thou appear in fashion’s ring,
 So near our cultured bed?”

Thy place is on the highway side,
 With nettle, weed, and thorn;
 They will not let thee long abide
 Near blossoms gently born!

We’re planted in a gay design,
 And tended day by day;
 Here do we live and proudly shine
 In all our trim array.

Grand ladies smile upon our bloom,
 And sigh when it is gone;
 Away, poor Hawkweed, there’s no room
 For thee upon our lawn.”

Thus did the rich Geranium seem
 To spurn the humbler flower,
 Which dared to show its golden gleam
 One sunny August hour.

The Hawkweed spread its sun-like orb
 Towards the beaming sky,
 Some of its fervour to absorb,
 And thus seem’d to reply:—

“Boast not, proud flower, of thy fair state,
 Now fortune smiles on thee;
 But bless the power that made thee great,
 And kindly look on me.

Though I intrude within the sphere
Mark'd out for thee alone,
'Tis not my fault that I am here,
So near thy queenly throne.

This turf from which my blossom sprung
Once deck'd the country lane ;
And there, my kindred wild among,
Content did I remain.

Till those who cherish thee with care
Removed me to this place,
Where I, it seems, must never dare
To show my rustic face.

The birds sang near my native home,
And danced the silver rill ;
Alas ! that I was forced to come
To stir up thy ill-will !

Rich petted flower, thou need'st not frown
Because I court the light ;
Soon fashion's shears will clip me down
And sweep me out of sight.

'Tis said thy spirit rules with men
Much more so than with flowers ;
They proudly spurn their neighbour, when
Misfortune o'er him lowers.

They tell us, too, each earthly lord
More love and light can boast,
Yet rich and poor in close accord
Is but a dream at most.

And novelties are ever prized
In this world of false show ;
While common creatures are despised
Wherever we may go,"

MY BEN IS COMING.

I'm waiting for gloomy November,
 I wish it were already here,
 Although it's the dreariest member
 Of all the twelve months of the year.
 Don't think I despise the fair weather
 Because I look forward to then,
 I'm anxious because I'm expecting
 To see the dear face of my Ben.

I've lived all the Summer in sadness,
 For when I walk'd out all alone,
 I saw other maids with their lovers,
 And I could not look on my own ;
 'Tis true I had glimpses of sunshine
 To cheer me sometimes, that was when
 I got through the Post those sweet letters
 That came from my true-hearted Ben.

Before my true love went to labour
 So far from the home of his birth,
 There was not a happier maiden
 Than I on the face of the earth.
 We wander'd in shade and in sunshine,
 Through flowery meadow and glen,
 And smiled in the love-brightened prospect
 Which lay around me and dear Ben.

Oh, hard is the fate that would sever
 Two lives that are blending in love ;
 Pure love is no crime, but must ever
 Be charter'd in heaven above !
 Kind fortune, restore his fair presence,
 The dearest to me among men ;
 I'm lonely, and cannot be happy
 Away from my true-hearted Ben !

HARVEST THOUGHTS.

Oh ! let us thank the gracious King
 From whom all joys and blessings spring !
 Whose hand provides a gen'rous feast
 To fill the mouths of man and beast !
 Let's thank Him for the ripen'd store
 That's ready for the threshing-floor ;
 Let's thank Him for the laden vine,
 And fruits that in the orchard shine.
 Let's bless Him for the countless sheep
 That dot the grassy mountain steep ;
 Let's bless Him for the teeming herds,
 Let's bless Him for both beasts and birds,
 But whilst we bless the hand that gives
 More than enough for all that lives,
 Let's pray that God may interpose
 To guard us from all human foes :
 For there are those who proudly stand
 'Twixt hungry mouths and His full hand :
 Who claim the privilege to sift
 With greedy hands each precious gift.
 The haughty land and money lords,
 With acres broad and golden hoards,
 Take nearly all, while those that toil
 Scarce get the refuse of the spoil.
 'Tis hard that those who till the soil,
 Through years of trouble and turmoil,
 Should get so little for their pains,
 While those who *toil not* reap the gains,

'Tis hard that those who spin and weave
From early morn till dusky eve,
Should have so little cloth and thread,
When they have paid for daily bread.
We see grand piles of brick and stone
Raised high for lazy lords to own.
And those that build these halls of pride
In low-brow'd hovels must reside.
Some dig the deep and darksome mine,
That wealthy homes may warmly shine,
Fell dangers daily struggling through
For means to live with comforts few.
Some may, perchance, exclaim—"Be still!
This is the Providential will!"
But can such monstrous wrong be right
In our good Father's holy sight?
No! 'tis vile blasphemy to say
That working folks are common prey
For lords who hold our acres broad,
And got the same through force and fraud.
Away, then, with that creed of devils
That would make heav'n the source of evils!
'Tis clear that God's benignant plan
Is frustrated by impious man.

CHARLEY IS COMING TO-DAY.

The mist-clouded Autumn is chilling
 The life of the flowers forlorn ;
 And the robin is tenderly trilling
 His plaintive address to the morn ;
 But my heart is all sunshine and lightness,
 As though 'twere the blossoming May ;
 And my face is reflecting the brightness,
 For Charley is coming to-day !

While young love our hearts was beguiling
 He left me at duty's harsh call ;
 And though the Spring flowers were smiling
 It seemed like the Summer's sad fall :
 The leaves are now falling in sadness,
 Yet joy gilds my heart with its ray ;
 And I revel in glory and gladness ;
 For Charley is coming to-day !

He has sent me a hundred sweet letters
 Since sighing his loving adieu ;
 And now he has broken his fetters
 He'll fly to me tender and true :
 How anxiously do I expect him ;
 Oh, may he speed safe on his way !
 Sweet angels of love, oh, protect him ;
 Dear Charley is coming to-day.

Oh, what is the Summer's bright glory
 To souls that are stricken and sad !
 E'en Winter, though cold, rough, and hoary,
 Is bright when love makes the heart glad.
 Sing, robin, thy dirge to the morning,
 And fall, yellow leaves from the spray ;
 But I cannot heed your sad warning,
 For Charley is coming to-day !

THE DAHLIA.

Alas! for thee, poor stricken flower,
 Thy bright career is run;
 No more thou'lt grace the garden bower,
 Or smile to greet the sun.
 But yesterday, in beauty rare,
 Thou reigned'st a smiling queen;
 None with thy beauty could compare,
 Or rival thy proud mien!
 With foliage like a blacken'd rag,
 Too mean for beggar's gear;
 Thou'rt drooping now like wretched hag
 Exciting pity's tear!
 Last night those clustering worlds of light,—
 The stars,—looked brightly down;
 And then I fear'd some keen frost might
 Rob thee of thy fair crown.
 This morning, on the grassy lawn,
 Array'd in icy mail,
 King Winter's hoary herald shone,
 Earth's beauty to assail.
 And thou, fair flower, so lately flush'd
 With beauty's luring charm,
 Art found the first poor victim crush'd
 Now Flora takes alarm.
 Ye lovers of fair Nature's lore
 Who read from page to page,
 Add this true picture to your store,
 Your fancy to engage.
 Ah, view this splendid floral gem,
 Awhile ago so gay,
 Shorn of her queenly diadem
 And ruin'd in a day!

Thus, when affliction's frosts descend
To nip the joys of life,
The proud and frail despairing bend
Like dahlias in the strife !

Another lesson we may learn
From this poor stricken flower :—
Death's fatal frost, when comes our turn,
May blast us in an hour !

AUTUMNTIDE.

October winds now blow, and the trees begin to show,
The ripe and ruddy beauty only seen
When the work of sad decay, progressing day by day,
With gold and russet variegates the green.

The ferns upon the heath are withering beneath
The chilly breathings of the length'ning night ;
With clusters black and red the brambles are o'erspread,
And the bloom upon the ling is turning white.

The thistle's purple crown flies off in airy down,
And the harebell bows its azure head to earth ;
The hawkweed's orb of gold, now shrinking from the
cold,
Smiles mournfully amidst the floral dearth.

The moss is creeping fair, o'er places lately bare,
Though prouder things lie languishing around ;
The robin's plaintive tale floats on the passing gale,
While the fallen leaves are rustling on the ground,

The hum of insect life is now no longer rife ;
The solitary wild bee hastens past,
Still searching for a flower to spend some sunny hour,
Returning lightly laden at the last.

The fine embroider'd net of the spider is now wet,
With the moisture of a hundred crystal beads ;
And the chilly breezes try, as they cut a passage by,
To wake their minstrelsy among the reeds.

The harvest song is done, and the crack of sportman's
gun
Makes havoc 'mong the furr'd and feather'd tribes ;
Grim winter's heralds shout, our dwellings round about,
And the storm our rural pleasure circumscribes.

In woodlands drear and dank we breathe the odours
rank
Thrown off from murky thicket as we rove ;
And we feel a strong desire for a snug place at the fire,
When the evening shadows brood within the grove.

Bring out your wools and furs, tender ladies and fair
sirs,
You'll need those Winter comforters anon :
Whilst daintily you fare, pray don't forget to care
For poor folks who have little to put on !

There'll be many, by and bye, with a tear-drop in the
eye,
And moans upon the lips of not a few ;
Extend a gracious hand, with the wealth at your com-
mand ;
The angels will record what you may do !

TO A DEAF FRIEND.

Poor Tom, I am sorry to see thee
 So deaf to the music of earth,
 While many sweet sounds are combining
 To wake the blithe spirit of mirth.

Alas ! thou art wistfully watching,
 Whilst we our full senses employ :
 Thy ears, though with harmony flooded,
 Can catch no impressions of joy.

Thy eyes behold beauty's enchantments,
 Which smile in fair colour or form ;
 But the sweet notes of love are unheeded,
 Unheard the wild voice of the storm.

The bright Summer blossoms may greet thee,
 And breathe out their sweets for thee still ;
 But vainly for thee the bird singeth,
 In vain laughs the silvery rill.

Like poetry shorn of its numbers
 The joys of thy fellows appear,
 While melody wearily waiteth
 Unhail'd at the porch of thine ear.

Bear, Tom, thy misfortune still bravely,
 And find consolation in this :—
 Full many harsh sounds that bear sorrow
 It is thy good fortune to miss !

Mirth often grows vain and licentious,
 And anger is vicious and fierce ;
 Thy heart would be oftentimes wounded
 If this could thy outer sense pierce.

Though deaf to the mirth and the music
 Pour'd forth by the pure and the true,
 The discordant noise of the vulgar
 Falls harmlessly also on you !

THE CHRYSANTHEMUM.

Hail, brave and fair Chrysanthemum,
 Last of the floral train ;
 In dull November weather
 To blossom thou art fain !

No rival flowers are striving
 To emulate thy bloom ;
 Each one that smiled before thee
 Has met an earlier doom.

No feather'd minstrel warbles
 A note thy life to cheer ;
 And scarce a sunbeam flingeth
 A transient halo near.

The yellow leaves are weaving
 A cover for thy bed ;
 And winds exhaust their fury
 On thy devoted head.

Still art thou heavenward lifted,
 When angry storms subside ;
 And Autumn's lingering perfumes
 Around thee yet abide.

Be cheerful in adversity !
 Thou seem'st to say to all,
 Whilst standing brave and smiling
 Amidst fair Summer's fall.

The lesson thou art teaching
 Is bitter to imbibe :
 Men rarely meet misfortune
 With smile and careless gibe.

We shrink like tender blossoms
When grief our hope destroys,
And sorrow's winter cometh
To freeze our fragile joys.

Smile, brave and fair Chrysanthemum,
Though cares may cloud my brow,
I'll note the wholesome lesson
Thou'rt teaching to us now.

TO THE WILD MARIGOLD.

Bright Marigold, wild Marigold,
Fair flower of ripe September ;
Why art thou lingering in the cold,
In dark, austere December ?

Thy deep-fringed, dew-bespangled eye,
Up-gazing through the stubble,
Appears to me, as I pass by,
Like some child's face in trouble.

There's scarce a flower alive, save thee,
Of nature's vast collection ;
They're all awaiting tranquilly
The vernal resurrection.

I'll take some pity on thy state,
And make a Winter posy
Of thy bright blossoms, ling'ring late,
To deck my cottage cozy.

Of wild flowers thou art now the best,
There's none thy bloom excelling ;
So thou shalt be a welcome guest
Within my humble dwelling.

I'll look upon thy sunlike face,
So beautiful and golden,
And I shall to its simple grace
Confess myself beholden.

For thou'lt converse to me of hours
Of sunny Summer weather,
When singing birds and smiling flowers
Well harmonize together.

Now other flowers have quit the earth,
And thou alone remainest,
Thou'rt prized amidst the dismal dearth,
And some small favour gainest.

Like poor men's virtues—little known—
Thy charms were long neglected :
But now all other flowers are flown
Thy beauty is respected.

Was't thou left on the wind-shorn plain
A shining golden token,
To show that nature's floral chain
Though buried, is not broken ?

That's hard to tell, but this we know,
Amidst the greatest sorrow,
There's often some small joy to show
Hope still lives in the morrow.

BLITHE REUBEN.

I'm a free son of toil, and they call me Blithe Reuben ;
 I never fear work if it wins me the means
 To pay my just dues, and a little sum over
 To help us through times when storm intervenes.

I've a snug little cot left me by my father,
 Who sleeps in the peace of his ripe well-spent years ;
 I first saw the light 'neath its stout oaken roof-tree,
 The old home to me ever pleasant appears.

Its walls are thick-clad with the green glossy ivy,
 The porch is with roses and woodbine enwove ;
 Its window is curtain'd inside with a myrtle,—
 The sweet plant we prize as an emblem of love.

I've got a good wife and two prattling beauties,—
 A stout little chap and a fair budding girl ;
 And if I'm not happy, possessed of these treasures,
 I ought to be spurned as an ill-natured churl.

I've taken a peep at the homes of the wealthy,
 I've been now and then to the hall on the lea,
 With carpets to walk on, and walls hung with pictures,
 But this waked no envious feelings in me.

I covet no part of their cumbersome splendour,
 Sad care may be blent with their pride and their
 gain.

I've felt all awry in the midst of their riches,
 And gladly return'd to my cot in the lane.

I sleep sound at night, and rise in the morning,
To rival the lark that sings blithe overhead ;
I never begrudge the dull ease of the idle,
With health on my cheek, and strength in my tread.

I drain a gay cup in the fair rosy gloaming
When the task of the day has been cheerfully done,
And neighbours drop in to joke and to gossip,
Our wives, never doubt, taking part in the fun.

In a lily-white frock to church, on a Sunday,
I go at the sound of the sweet village bells,
To praise Him who governs my life and its pleasures,
And gave me a heart in which gratitude dwells.

Thus would I live on still, ne'er fearing to labour,
A smile on my lip and calm joy in my heart ;
Secure from the vicious delights of the city,
Performing my humble uncoveted part.

THE PIC-NIC PARTY.

When to Habberley we rambled,
 Surely hearts were never gladder
 Than our youngsters', as they scrambled
 Up the height called Jacob's ladder.

Through the dear romantic valley
 Rang their loud and happy voices ;
 And the rocks at every sally,
 Echo'd back their merry noises.

When they clamber'd to the summit,
 Fringed with hoary ling and heather,
 Down they tumbled, straight as plummet,
 On the thymy earth together.

Soon the romping lads were rolling
 Down the green slopes, daisy dotted ;
 Mirth like theirs there 's no controlling
 When there 's holiday allotted !

Every alley, rock, and bower
 Hail'd our wild exploring party ;
 Almost every bush and flower
 Gained from them a welcome hearty.

Till at length, 'neath birchen branches.
 On a hillock green and quiet,
 They dropt panting on their haunches,
 'Mong our sandwiches to riot.

Not much sauce was there required,
And for grace they hardly waited ;
Appetites keen as desired
They had zealously created !

That's the way our youngsters squander'd,
In a free unstinted measure,
One fine day when forth we wander'd
For a taste of rural pleasure.

Homeward, in the rosy gloaming,
We return'd with spirits cheery ;
Well contented with our roaming,
Though our limbs were rather weary.

THE DEAD SKYLARK.

“ Oh Mother, see this pretty bird
 With soft and speckled breast ;
 I killed him with a well-aimed stone,
 As he sang near his nest ! ”

Thus did a thoughtless boy exclaim,
 Proud of his prowess bold ;
 And soon the gentle mother thus
 Her disapproval told ;—

“ My boy, that was a cruel deed,
 I cannot praise your skill ;
 It is a sin against kind heaven
 Thus wantonly to kill !

P'rhaps when you struck him with your stone
 His throat was full of praise,
 To Him who bids the flowers bloom
 And spreads the sun's bright rays !

While men blaspheme His sacred name,
 And will no praises sing,
 That bird a ready homage paid
 To heaven's Paternal King !

And p'rhaps some loving lady bird
 Now mourns the hapless fate
 Of him that often sweetly sang
 At heaven's shining gate ! ”

“ Oh, Mother, let your anger cease,”
The smitten boy replied,
“ I’m sorry that I killed him now ;
Pray do no longer chide !

I’ll never kill another lark,
But let them sing and soar
Up in the blue and sunny sky,
Or sit on earth’s green floor !

I would not check the simplest song
Ascending up to heaven,
In gratitude to heaven’s Lord
For blessings freely given !

I’ll ask our Father in the skies
My folly to forgive :
That little bird p’rhaps had a right
As well as I to live ! ”

These lines were founded on an incident related to me by a shopmate while we were walking in the country.

